هكذا من الأصل

MAY 29, 1997

1848 — Wisconsin became the 30th state of the United States.

1974 — Northern Ireland was brought under direct rule from Westminster one day after the collapse of the Northern Ireland executive. The crippling general strike in the province also ended.

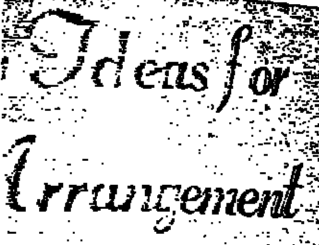
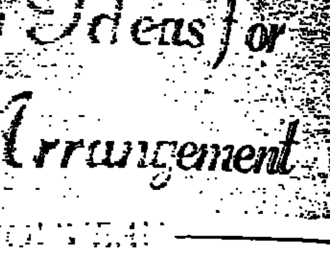
1979 — Mary Pickford, silent movie star, died. She was one of the original team who formed the film company United Artists Corporation in 1919 along with Douglas Fairbanks, D.W. Griffith and Charlie Chaplin.

1979 — In Salisbury, bishop Abel Muzorewa sworn in as Zimbabwe rhodesia's first black prime minister.

1982 — Pope Paul II, in the first papal vist to Britain since 1531, prayed alongside the archbishop of Canterbury, head of the church of England, in Canterbury cathedral.

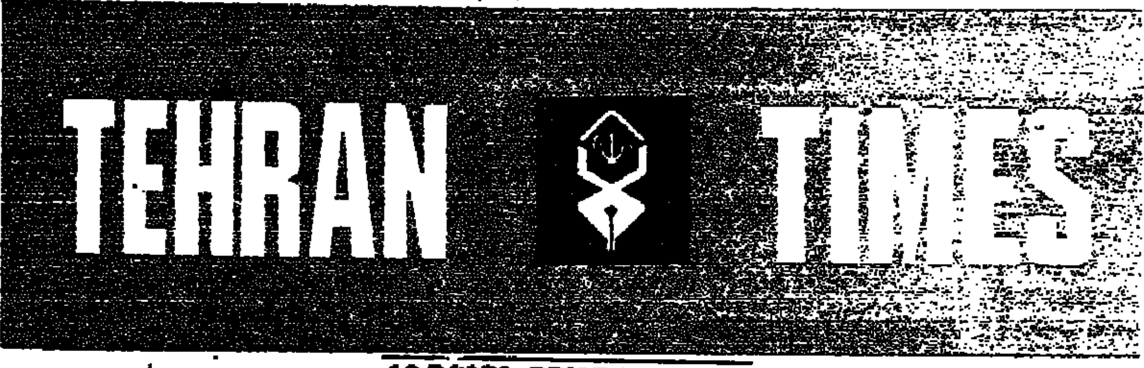
1985 — 39 fans, mostly Italian, were crushed or trampled to death in rioting involving Liverpool and Juventus supporters at the European cup final at Brussels Heysel Stadium. Over 400 people were injured.

1994 — Erich Honecker, who ruled East Germany with an iron fist for 18 years and supervised the erection of the Berlin Wall, died in exile in Chile. He was 81.


Ideas for Arrangement

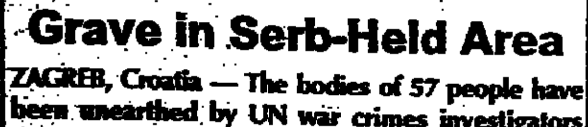




TEHRAN TIMES

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57 Bodies Found in Mass Grave in Serb-Held Area

ZAGREB, Croatia — The bodies of 57 people have been unearthed by UN war crimes investigators working at a mass grave in the last Serb-held area in eastern Croatia, government officials said Friday.

Government officials believe the victims are Croat civilians who were killed in October 1991 during the Serbo-Croat war that erupted after minority Serbs rebelled against Croatia's independence from Yugoslavia. (Contd on Pg. 14)

Iraq Blames Turkish Incursion on U.S. Plot

BAGHDAD — The official Iraqi newspaper Al-Iraq on Saturday accused Turkey of sending its troops into northern Iraq as a cover for the United States.

"Turkey's savage military invasion of (Iraqi) Kurdistan is simply an undercover U.S. aggression using Turkish instruments," Al-Iraq wrote. (Contd on Pg. 14)

UN Calls On Israel to Pay for Qana Shelling Damages

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations, in an unprecedented move, on Saturday called on Israel to pay $1.7 million in damages for the Israeli shelling of a UN compound in Lebanon in which 105 people died.

The UN General Assembly's fifth committee, responsible for financing, adopted a resolution in a vote in the early hours of Saturday providing for Israel to pay for the damages arising from the shelling of the UN compound at Qana, Southern Lebanon, on April 18 last year.

A total of 107 states voted in favor, while Israel and the United States voted against and three others abstained. The fifth committee normally takes its decisions by consensus.

European delegations attempted to forge a compromise, but the Lebanese delegation insisted a vote on the original resolution.

The U.S. delegation also insisted on a separate vote Saturday on the paragraph stipulating that (Contd on Pg. 14)

NIAZOV: ECO Provides Gateway to East and West



By Our Correspondent

ASHKHABAD, Turkmenistan - President Saparmurat Niazov underlined the significance of the regional cooperation and said, "The countries in this part of the world can play a crucial role as a gateway for the East and the West."

Niazov said, "Oil and gas can play an indispensable role in having closer regional cooperation."

President Niazov in an interview with the *Tehran Times* commented on the outcome of the May 13-14 extraordinary summit of the 10-member Economic Cooperation Organization held here.

Turkmenistan hosted the summit to discuss ways to export the land-locked areas' oil and gas riches. Iran was represented by President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

On the fringe of the ECO summit, Niazov talked to the *Tehran Times* correspondent on a number of subjects related to regional and bilateral issues.

He said, "The future generations will remember the contemporary period as the revitalization of Irano-Turkmen friendship era."

Niazov, 57, apparently was referring to mutual understanding and farsightedness existing between the officials of the two countries.

Turkmenistan borders northern Iran and the two nations have signed some 120 cooperation agreements since establishing ties in 1992 with two-way trade at $100 million a year.

"Establishment of a common energy supply network received priority attention by the participants at the ECO summit," Niazov, born in a workers' family told the Tehran Times.

Head of the governments of Afghanistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Turkey, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan attended the summit.

Niazov's father was killed in the Second World War and most of his family members became the victims of a killer earthquake in Ashkhabad in 1948.

He is one of the prominent leaders of the former Soviet republics who paid necessary attention to the (Contd on Pg. 14)

President: Islamic Revolution, Materialization of Divine Promise

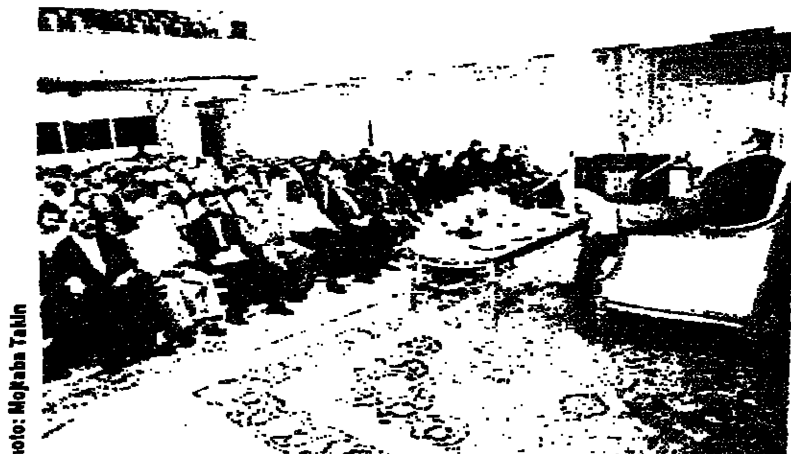


Photo: Mojtaba Taklin

TEHRAN — President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said here on Saturday that the 20-year old Islamic Revolution is the best historical example of the materialization of divine promises and of wonderful development of man and society.

Speaking to foreign dignitaries who attended ceremonies marking the demise anniversary of the Late Imam Khomeini, President Rafsanjani said that the turbulent and eventful years that followed the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution can be the basis of research studies by Muslim scholars and the origin of new religious thoughts and attitudes.

Referring to the fact that the global arrogance has confessed to the rapid progress made by Iran, Rafsanjani said, "all this glory achieved in a short period of time thanks to the Islamic Revolution seems inconceivable and something unexpected for those who thought only laic and secular governments can made such progress.

He said the baseless charges levelled against Iran by the global arrogance was a move taken by it following its defeats in various military and economic areas.

"The global arrogance which always accused Iran of human rights violations, after seeing the massive participation of people in the presidential election came to realize the futility of this plot. Then it tried to insinuate that people had not voted for the system, leadership and clergymen in a bid to offset its scandalous defeat."

Referring to another false claim of the global arrogance that Iran was trying to obtain weapons of (Contd on Pg. 14)

Taleban For Peace Only When Losing Ground

FOCUS

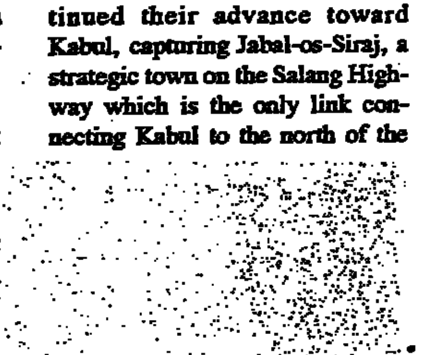
Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Last week, when the forces of Uzbek General Abdul Malik Pahlevan drove the Taleban militia out of Mazar-i-Sharif, inflicting heavy casualties on them, the Taleban authorities in Kabul, also under pressure by the Tajik warlord Ahamd Shah Masood and the forces affiliated to the Hezb-i-Wahdat, sent an olive-branch to the government forces, inviting them for peace talks.

But the government forces continued their advance toward Kabul, capturing Jabal-os-Siraj, a strategic town on the Salang Highway which is the only link connecting Kabul to the north of the country. The town is some 77 kilometers from the Afghan capital.

As the government forces were making gains, the Islamic Republic of Iran called on all Afghan warring factions to stop fighting and apply peaceful means to find a lasting solution to the crisis in their country. Indeed, the Iranian Foreign Ministry officials have always stressed that no single group is able to dominate the political scene in Afghanistan and continued clashes will only yield more loss of lives and destruction of the war-ravaged country.

Also, the Iranian deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Af- (Contd on Pg. 14)





Four Algerian Parties Cry Foul in Election's Wake

ALGIERS — Four Algerian opposition parties united Saturday to denounce what they called "massive fraud" in Thursday's legislative elections.

International observer teams were Saturday expected to begin issuing their conclusions on the polls.

In an outcome that many had expected, the National Democratic Rally (RND) — founded earlier this year by Zeroual loyalists, including Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia — won 155 sets in the 380-seat chamber.

That is not a majority in itself, but when combined with the 64 seats won by the like-minded National Liberation Front (FLN) the result is a solid bloc of conservative secularists that Zeroual can rely on.

RND leader Abdelkader Bensalah, at a press conference, was vague when asked whether his party and the FLN would strike up any formal parliamentary alliance.

"The RND from the beginning has been a party that wants to work together with others," he said evasively.

Complaints were being heard, (Contd on Pg. 14)

Tajik Peace Accord to Be Signed on June 27

DUSHANBE — The rival sides in Tajikistan's protracted civil war are expected to sign a peace accord in Moscow on June 27, a spokesman for the United Nations mission in the former Soviet republic said on Saturday.

The Tajik government and the United Tajik Opposition, who have been fighting since 1992, postponed the signing of the long awaited peace deal earlier this month citing undisclosed "technical reasons".

The UN spokesman in Dushanbe said the deal, due to be signed by Tajik President Imomali Rakhmonov and the opposition leader Sayed Abdollah Nouri will

(Contd on Pg. 14)

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In the Name of God

And they say: Why is not a sign sent to him from his Lord? Say: The unseen is only for Allah; therefore wait— surely I too, with you am of those who wait.

(HOLY QORAN) (10:20)

OPINION

Arabs Must Act Today

The unconditional U.S. support for Israel is gaining amazing momentum, while Israeli influence in the U.S. is becoming alarming not only for the U.S., but for world peace. In its latest move to support the Israeli cause, Washington voted against a UN resolution providing for Israel to pay 1.7 million dollars in damages arising from its shelling of the UN compound at Qana, southern Lebanon, on April 18, 1996.

Israel and the United States voted against the resolution, while 107 countries voted in favor.

The shelling of Qana, which took the lives of 105 Lebanese civilian refugees taking shelter in the compound, occurred during Israel's 17-day Grapes of Wrath operation in South Lebanon against the Hezbollah. According to a UN investigation, the Israeli bombardment of the Qana base was deliberate.

If deliberate shelling of a UN base and the killing of innocent refugees is not terrorism, what is?

The most serious problem the international community faces today is the unilateral interpretation of concepts by big powers. While on one hand, the United States resorts to sanctions diplomacy against other countries, accusing them of sponsoring terrorism, on the other hand, it has become the main sponsor of Israeli state terrorism.

What is meant by terrorism? This is what the world needs to know at this stage.

What is worse, when the UN decides to punish the culprit, Washington blocks the move. Israel has committed a crime against humanity and the United Nations. Therefore, it is natural to ask the culprit to pay for damages it has inflicted upon humanity.

Earlier, too, the U.S. blocked a UN resolution condemning Israeli shelling of Qana.

The blind U.S. support of Israel stems from the cancerous spread of Israeli influence in all aspects of life in the United States. In other words, it is the U.S. which is taking orders from Israel, not the other way round.

The unconditional U.S. support of Israel should be an eye-opener for Arabs who, in the final analysis, will be the prime target of Israeli expansionism. Unfortunately, Arabs are in hibernation. When they wake up, it will be too late. Arabs must act today.

Khatami Sends Reply Messages to World Leaders



Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — President-elect Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Khatami on Saturday sent separate messages to the heads of state and leaders of several countries, thanking them for their congratulation messages on his election as the fifth president of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In his messages, the president-elect expressed hope that all-out relations between Iran and those countries would further expand, and mutual interests in political, economic and cultural fields would be promoted in the near future.

Boroujerdi Confers With Ranking Afghan Officials

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs Alaeddin Boroujerdi met with Afghan high-ranking officials in Afghanistan to discuss latest developments in the war-stricken country and explore ways to cease hostilities.

In his meeting with Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani on Thursday, Boroujerdi said that experience has proved that war cannot bring about a solution to Afghan problem and stability should be restored to Afghanistan solely through presence of all parties and tribes in Afghan political structure.

According to IRNA, the Iranian deputy minister also called for resolving of Afghan problem through holding negotiations among all Afghan factions and called on the international community to roll up sleeves and prevent continuation of war in the country.

Rabbani said that the latest developments in Afghanistan indicated that Afghan people were resisting and standing interventions and efforts by certain countries.

He underlined that no one can mar historical, spiritual and cultural relations between Iranian and Afghan nations.

Boroujerdi had earlier met with Tajik Foreign Minister Talbak Nazarov on his way to Afghanistan, where he underlined the need to expand cooperation among regional countries for peaceful and comprehensive settlement of cur-



rent disputes and considering any foreign meddling as an element which aggravates the situation in Afghanistan.

He called on the UN to support legal government of Afghanistan and abandon indifference towards the country, preventing aliens' intervention there.

— On Friday Boroujerdi reviewed the latest developments in Afghanistan and possible ways of ending crisis in that country with the head of the Decision-Making Council of the Islamic Unity Party in northern Afghanistan.

Haj Mohammad Mohaqqeq appreciated Iran's continued efforts to help solve the crisis in Afghanistan and noted that the Islamic Unity Party does not consider war as a solution to the crisis in the war-torn country and holds the view that the complex issue can be resolved only through political means.

Mohaqqeq added that the elimination of ethnic groups from the power structure in Afghanistan is a mistake which will only prolong the crisis and darken outlooks for peace.

At the same time he declared that by convening various power factions and groups, a suitable political solution to the problem can be evolved.

Outlining Iran's stand on the Afghan crisis, Boroujerdi pointed out that Iran will persistently continue its efforts to achieve a lasting nationwide peace in Afghanistan.

The Iranian deputy foreign minister and leader of Afghan National Islamic Movement General Abdulmalek discussed the latest Afghan developments and ways of restoring peace and calm there on Friday.

Thanking Iran for its peace seeking efforts in Afghanistan, Abdulmalek said that by forming a united Islamic front, members of his party had with other Afghan

(Contd on Pg. 14)

Velayati Due in Ukraine Next Week

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati is to pay a two-day visit to Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, next week at the invitation of his Ukrainian counterpart Gennadi Udovenko.

The minister announced his forthcoming Ukraine visit while receiving the incoming Ukrainian Ambassador to Tehran, Vledimir Butiaga, here on Saturday. At the meeting, the ambassador presented his credentials to Velayati.

The Iranian foreign minister hoped that the Ukrainian diplomat would complete his mission in Tehran successfully and expressed satisfaction over the boosting of relations between the two countries.

Thailand's Parliament Speaker to Visit Tehran

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The Thai Parliament Speaker Hwan Mohammad Nurmata is scheduled to arrive in Tehran on Monday on a three-day visit at the invitation of his Iranian counterpart.

During his stay, the Thai parliamentarian will hold talks with the Majlis Speaker Hojjatoleslam Ali Akbar Nateq Nouri, President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the President-elect Hojjatoleslam Seyed Mohammad Khatami and some other high-ranking Iranian officials.

Habibi Congratulates New Yemeni PM



Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — First Vice President Hassan Habibi on Saturday sent a message to the new Yemeni Premier Faraj Saeed bin Ghanem, congratulating him on his appointment to the post.

In his message, Habibi expressed hope that the brotherly relations between Iran and Yemen would be further enhanced during Ghanem's tenure.

Iran, Morocco Sign MOU on Scientific Cooperation

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — A memorandum of understanding was signed between Iran and Morocco on Friday on expansion of academic and scientific cooperation and setting up of university courses, training efficient academic board and conducting joint scientific research.

Iranian Minister of Culture and Higher Education Mohammad Reza Hashemi Golpaygani and National Education Minister of Morocco Erdis Khalil were the signatories to the memorandum, which called for setting up of a Persian language course in Morocco, for establishment of a course on the history and civilization of Morocco in Iran and for exchange of professors and researchers.

They also agreed on cooperation between their universities in the areas of education and research, an IRNA report said.

After his five-day stay in Iran, Khalil called Iran's potentiality for expansion of academic centers as "astonishing."

TEHRAN — Head of Association of Chinese Muslims Imam Saleh on Friday underlined the need for strengthening of relations between Iranian and Chinese Muslims.

According to IRNA, Saleh made the remark in a meeting with Deputy Head of Iranian Islamic Culture and Relations Organization Hojjatoleslam Abolhassan Nawab in Beijing.

Nawab said the association played an outstanding role in protecting Muslims in China.

Amini Lauds People's Massive Participation in Elections

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Friday prayer leader of Qom Ayatollah Ebrahim Amini, addressing the worshipers at the congregational prayers, said that Iranian people by their massive turnout in the 7th presidential elections proved that they are interested in the Islamic system of Iran and its leadership as well as their own fate.

He added that the people have legitimate demands which should be met by the next president.

He also said that materialization of people's expectations needs strength and sincere cooperation of all authorities.

Extending condolences on the passing away anniversary of the late Imam Khomeini, the ayatollah said that the Imam made great services to Islam and Muslims during his life.

He added that the Founder of the Islamic Republic revived the Islamic thoughts and presented Islam as a powerful religion.

Japanese Minister Calls For Expansion of Educational Cooperation With Iran

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Japanese Minister of Education Takashi Kosugi on Friday called the expansion of Tehran-Tokyo cooperation in the field of education and science essential.

According to IRNA, Kosugi made the remark in a meeting with Iranian Ambassador to Tokyo Manouchehr Mottaki.

The Japanese minister added that his country favors signing of agreements with Iran in the field of research and exchange of university students and professors.

According to a letter of understanding signed with Tokyo University last March, Tehran and Tokyo universities in addition to exchanging instructors and researchers will reciprocally admit Iranian and Japanese students.

Mottaki referred to admission of more Iranian students by Japanese universities as a step towards promotion of bilatral educational cooperation.

Official figures say that 13 to 15 Iranian students are admitted annually to Japanese universities in masters and Ph.D. levels.

Prayer Leader: Taleban Cannot Rule in Afghanistan

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Friday prayer leader of Zahedan, Sistan-Baluchestan, Hojjatoleslam Mohammadian said on Friday that the history as well as the freedom-seeking struggles of the Iranian nation could be a lesson for the world, especially for the neighboring countries, IRNA reported.

Hojjatoleslam Mohammadian, who is also representative of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei in Zahedan, said that popular forces and governments had always been victorious in Afghanistan as well.

He said that the Taleban, which follow policies of the U.S., could not rule over such an Islamic land, which had been confronting the former Soviet Red Army for years.

500kg of Drugs Seized in Yazd

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Over 510 kg of narcotic drugs were confiscated by the Law Enforcement Forces of Yazd Province, central Iran, last week, an IRNA report said.

The Law Enforcement Forces of Yazd announced on Saturday that eight smugglers were arrested in this connection.

This brings to 977 kg the total of illicit drugs confiscated in the province since May 22.

Meanwhile, a narcotics distribution gang was busted in the northwestern Province of West Azarbaijan in the past few days.

A local security official said on Saturday that five smugglers were arrested and 1.7 kg of cocain seized.

Khatami: Giant Assets of Solidarity, Friendship Should Be Guarded

TEHRAN — President-elect Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Khatami said here on Thursday that great assets of solidarity and friendship resulting from the presidential elections should be preserved.

Hojjatoleslam Khatami, who was addressing scores of the members of his election campaign headquarters round the country at martyr Afrasiabi hall on Thursday, said mission of the headquarters' staff had not yet been over after the elections and they should remain as the trustees of the president serving the system, revolution and people.

He said the seventh presidential elections had born abundant blessings and that he was proud of being trusted by the world's "worthiest" nation, adding that "such an issue makes me feel greater responsibility."

He observed that after the presidential elections, enemies of the Islamic Revolution admitted to the stability and popularity of the Islamic Republic of Iran's system in which people determined their own destiny.

Calling recent elections as the most serious one of its kind at the national level, Hojjatoleslam Khatami said there had been no such a serious and tough competition among the nominees as was observed during the event.

The president-elect said the contenders entered the campaign with dignity, responsibility and with a pre-declared program with a view to enabling people to choose their favorite candidate.

He observed that the vast turnout of people amongst various social strata, particularly women and the youth, in the elections indicated a firm national will aimed at defending values and striving for elevation of Islamic Iran.

He prayed that Almighty would enable him to fulfill the great responsibility entrusted to him by people.

Concluding his remarks, Khatami praised "enthusiastic" public presence in the polling stations, saying that such noble people had turned out in the elections out of sharing a common feeling of responsibility.

(IRNA)

The Taliban Fiasco

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — An article published on Sunday in a Pakistani daily, the *Frontier Post*, blames Pakistan's policy and the Taliban for the continued bloodshed that grips Afghanistan.

"Like other neighbors which are directly affected by the war in Afghanistan, Pakistan's perception of the current situation suffers for lack of insight," the daily said.

"Rather than try to dilute the situation and bring the warring factions together on a negotiating table, these countries had been pursuing narrow policies to suit their interest," the daily continued, obviously referring to Pakistan's hasty decision in recognizing the Taliban government.

The euphoria created by the fall of Mazar-i Sharif last week to the Taliban (and the defection of northern warlord Gen. Rashid Dostum) has now turned into a nightmare.

What was considered a final crippling blow to the might of Taliban's main opponent and the last hurdle in their way to having total control of the country proved to be a deadly scare.

According to unconfirmed reports some 3000 Taliban were killed during the recent days of fighting in the north.

The Taliban were themselves to blame for this reversal. Instead of consolidating their gains by handling the newly found allied forces of Gen. Malik, Rashid Dostum's erstwhile comrade-in-arms, they tried to disarm his men who turned against them with vengeance. What they had won on the battlefront they lost through their sheer political folly in a country where carrying of arms is a sign of manliness and where nobody would

(Contd on Pg. 14)

President-Elect Arrives in Mashad

MASHAD — President-elect Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Khatami arrived in this Holy city, in northeast Iran, Saturday morning on a one day visit.

He was welcomed at the airport by representative of the Leader and superintendent of the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza (AS), Ayatollah Abbas Vaez Tabasi, the governor general of Khorasan Province, as well as ranking local military and civilian officials.

Immediately after arrival in Mashad, the president-elect paid a pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Imam of the Household of the Prophet (PBUH)). He was accorded an enthusiastic welcome by pilgrims when entering the holy shrine.

Khatami is to inspect the quake-stricken cities of Birjand and Qa'en, in southeast of the province.

A killer quake with a magnitude of 7.1 hit the area on May 10 killing over 2,500 persons.

Reconstruction of quake-stricken areas will start in the presence of the president-elect.

(IRNA)

Leading Arab Daily Lambasts U.S.' Iran Policy

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The editor-in-chief of the daily *Al-Hayat* Jahad Al-Khazen based in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, editorialized on Iran-U.S. relations and berated U.S. pronouncements affecting Iran and Muslims at large.

He writes in the June 1, 1997 edition of the daily that Washington's blind support for the Zionist regime is the main cause of continuing antagonism.

Al-Khazen argues that to revamp relations, it is not Iran but the U.S. that should take the first step.

The editorial, rendered into Persian, reads that in the few days that has elapsed since the election of Mohammad Khatami as Iran's president, public discussion has focused on who should take the first step for improvement of relations between Tehran and Washington.

Iran's president-elect has said that prior to any dialogue between the two countries the U.S. should change its policy.

The U.S. administration, on the other hand, insists that prior to any dialogue Iran should change its policy.

As a matter of fact, the election of Mr. Khatami itself signifies a change, because he is a man with the capability to reconcile conflicting stances of theological seminaries and universities.

Khatami's bold and innovative ideas and thoughts have found expression not only in recent days; he has manifested them ever since he chaired the Islamic Center in Hamburg where his ability to talk with Germans and Muslims in modern Islamic language was demonstrated.

Al-Hayat's editor further writes that President-elect Khatami's shining performance as minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance is found in the eye-catching cultural, artistic, cinematic and theater-related movement that blossomed when he was discharging the post.

But the change that has been launched with the election of Mr. Khatami may not be what the U.S. has in mind because the change will, in all likelihood, have a domestic context.

(To be Contd.)

JUNE 8, 1997

g Afghan Officials

Habibi Congratulates New Yemeni PM

Tehran Times Service

500kg of Drugs Seized in Yazd

Tehran Times Service

Iran Records Surplus in External Finances

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - Iran continued to reduce its liabilities to foreign banks while increasing its assets during 1996 to record its first surplus since its debt crisis at the beginning of the 1990s.

According to the latest report from the Bank of International Settlement, claims against Iran by Western banks last year fell by over $1 billion to $10.61 billion, more than $100 million less than its assets, which reached a record $10,72 billion last over the past two years, Iran has reversed a $3.6 billion deficit in its external position in 17 OECD countries to a surplus of just over $100 million record in December 1996, IRNA reported from London.

In previous reports, the Basle-based bank has recorded a 'notable decline' in Iran's debt situation, while achieving a more even balance in the distribution by maturity of claims in a general drive to restore the country's creditworthiness reputation.

PTT Minister Off to Singapore

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - Minister of Post, Telephone and Telegraph, Mohammad Gharazi, heading a delegation, left here Saturday to attend the International Telecom 97 Exhibition which was to open in Singapore yesterday.

Prior to his departure, he told IRNA that privatization of telecommunication networks and competition among them, providing capital for updating and developing telecommunication networks, determining final objectives of telecommunication development, expansion of mobile telephones, and fixing price of telecommunication services will be among issues to be discussed in the meeting.

The Iranian delegation will put forward a number of proposals including, reduced price of telecommunication services by private companies, developing telecommunication network through domestic capital and promoting the culture of using communication facilities, Gharazi noted.

Representatives from 60 member states of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) are attending the one-week exhibition.

Iranian Part of Olya Port Soon to Be Built

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - Construction operations are soon to be launched for the Iranian part of Olya Port around the Caspian Sea 150 kms south of Russian Astarakhan Port.

. The Russian part of the port was put into operation on Thursday in presence of Russian Transport Minister Nhkolai Tsakh and the visiting Iranian Deputy Roads and Transportation Minister and Head of Ports and Shipping Organization Mohammad Madad, IRNA reported.

Madad said at the ceremony that a contract is to be concluded by next month between the two parties for formation of a joint company in charge of building the port and soon after operations would be launched on construction of the Iranian part of the port.

He said the port was of high significance because of its immunity from freezing of Volga River in the winter season and that a consignment of 2,000 tons of iron would be loaded for Iran soon after operationing of the Russian part of the port.

He expressed hope that the Iranian contractor would start work on the project soon after conclusion of the related documents and would deliver the dock within a period of nine months.

Olya port has the capacity of hosting up to 4,000-ton ships and of handling 50,000 tons of cargo per year.

In a series of talks held with Russian officials, said the Iranian officials, Iran can contribute to handling eight million tons of cargo via the port annually.

He underlined that Olya and Astarakhan ports played a highly important role in handling cargo between Iran and Russia and in linking the two countries with the European and Asian markets.

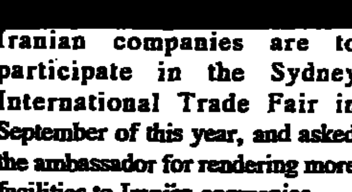
He said that Russia can transport its cargo to such countries as Pakistan and India with a 33 percent discount via the port and Iran can in return gain an easy access to Russia and Europe.

Madad continued that Iran and Russia had agreed on transit of 140,000 tons of Russian goods via the Caspian Sea and the Iranian territory by the year end on March 20, 1998.

He pointed out that a shipping line would be inaugurated between Russian Astarakhan and Olya ports and Iran's northern Nowshahr port through which Iranian and Russian lorries would be capable of carrying cargo to either destination by passing a marine overfly.

He concluded that Iran has called on the Caspian Sea littoral states to attend a session in Tehran this year to survey variety of subjects within the framework of their naval cooperation and pertinent to the ships traffic system, fight against contamination and saving lives of the victims.

Iran, Australia for Boosting Trade Ties



Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Australian companies are ready to cooperate with Iran in carrying out giant projects, such as the Iran-India gas transfer project, Australian Ambassador to Tehran, Stuart Hume, said here yesterday.

Talking in a meeting with Shams Ardekani, Secretary General, and Askar Owladi, Deputy Chairman of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Mines (ICCIM), Hume underscored the eagerness of Australia to further boost the two countries' economic and trade ties.

He said that continuous contact between Australia and Iran's Chamber of Commerce will further develop and cement the two countries' relations.

On his part, Shams Ardekani told the ambassador that ICCIM is ready to hold exhibitions and exchange trade delegation in order to enhance the trade volume between the two countries.

He further said that having useful experiences in laying gas pipes, Australia can contribute to carrying out the Iran-India gas transfer project and its peripheral works.

Meanwhile, talking to Hume, Askar Owladi, said that 20 to 30 Iranian companies are to participate in the Sydney International Trade Fair in September of this year, and asked the ambassador for rendering more facilities to Iranian companies.

67,500 Tons of Kazakh Crude Oil Exported via Iran

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - Iran exported 67,500 tons of crude oil on behalf of Kazakhstan on May 31 under an oil swap deal signed by the two countries, the National Kazakh Oil and Gas Company, Kazakh Oil said on Saturday.

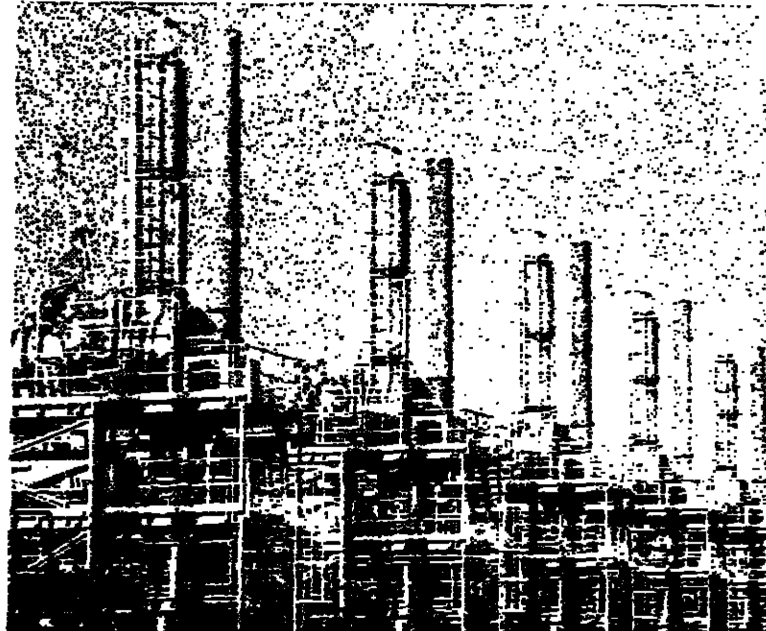
Based on the agreement, Kazakhstan will deliver crude oil to Iran via northern Iranian ports on the Caspian Sea and in turn Iran will export the same amount of oil on behalf of Kazakhstan via the Persian Gulf, IRNA reported from Almaty.

Kazakh President Nursultan A. Nazarbayev in an interview with reporters last month called the oil swap deal with Iran as "a historical event" in Kazakh economy.

Under the deal, Kazakhstan would offer upto two million tons of its crude to international markets via Iran and the amount woud gradually increase to six million tons per year.

The experimental export of Kazakh crude via Iran which started in January has now stopped due to some technical problems and experts are working to remove the problem.

According to the head of Kazakh Oil, Kazakhstan is to export one million tons of its crude oil via Iran this year.



CBI Governor Off to Switzerland

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - Governor of the Central Bank of Iran Mohsen Noorbakhsh heading a delegation left Tehran Saturday for Switzerland to take part at the annual session of international Settlements Bank (ISB).

The annual conference of ISB is held in the city of Basel of Switerland with participation of ministers of economy, governors of central banks, economists and businessmen from around the world.



China Adds to Maze of Central Asian Project

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - China's move to buy a multi-billion dollar stake in a Kazakhstan oil company attaches another direction from the maze of pipeline proposal to export crude from the landlocked riches of Central Asia.

The $3.5 billion pipeline plan attached a 60 percent share in Aktyubinsk Oil Company was thought, according the *Financial Times* Thursday, to have been "an important factor in swaying the decision in China's favor."

China National Petroleum Corporation beat off competition from U.S. and Russian oil companies to secure the 20-year venture at a cost of more than $4 billion with Aktyubinsk, which has estimated reserves of 483 million tons and produces some 2.6 million tons.

Its pipeline plan through Kazakhstan adds to the complex maze of oil export routes from Central Asian proposed by an array of Western firms, which are being deterred by U.S. threats to transport crude by any other route but the most logical through Iran.

The latest deal is by far China's biggest foreign investment and is seen reflecting the country's need to supplement domestic oil production with imports that are expected to rise five-fold by the year 2010 from current levels of 400,000 barrels per day.

Two Planeloads of Sudanese Relief Supplies Arrive

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - Two Sudanese charter planes landed in Tehran carrying relief supplies presented by the Khartoum government to the survivors of the Khorasan quake, said the Sudanese embassy in Tehran in a press release Saturday.

Semnan Exports Over 400 Tons of Goods

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - Some 440,875 kg of goods were exported from Semnan province during the last Iranian month, April 21-May 21, director general of standard and industrial research of the province Mahmoud Naeemi said Saturday.

He added that the commodities, worth Rls.653.330 million, included sportswear, dried apricot, canned food, tomato sauce, soap, macaroni, and biscuit.

The items were exported to Germany, Central Asian countries and Afghanistan, he said.

India for Increase in Software Exports to Iran

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - India is looking forward to increasing its exports to Iran in electronics and computer software segments, which in 1996-97 amounted to a mere $1.48 million, according to the Director of Electronics and Computer Software Export Promotion Council (ESC) of India, R.H. Naqvi.

Naqvi told IRNA this morning, "Iran represents an area of interest in ESC's newly evolved strategy to tap markets like Persian Gulf, Africa, Brazil and Canada."

He added that India's exports to traditional markets like the U.S. was coming down, while the volume of exports to South East Asia, Persian Gulf and Europe was increasing.

Naqvi, however, said that exports worth $1.48 million to Iran represented only a meagre amount in India's total software exports to the tune of $2.54 billion in 1996-97.

More Indian companies than just eight shall have to explore the possibilities in Iran if exports of electronic goods and software items from India are to go up, pointed out Naqvi adding that there was also the need of diversifying the items exported to Iran.

Samtel Electronics, Bharat Electronics, Titen Industries and ET&T Corporation are the major companies involved in software exports to Iran, while black and white picture tube, toys and a few software instruments comprise the main items of Iran's software and electronics imports from India.

Being at $2.54 billion in 1996-97, India's exports in electronics and computer software segments registered a growth of 34 percent over previous year's $1.9 billion, according to data available with the ESC.

The contribution to electronics and computer software to India's over all exports increased to 7.7 percent from 3.2 percent in 1996-97.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES

The following table shows the foreign exchange rates in rials as released by the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran on saturday, June 7, 1997.

COUNTRY	UNIT	Floating Rates BUY	Floating Rates SELL	Export Rates BUY	Export Rates SELL
Australia	dollar	1,328	1,335	2,279	2,290
Austria	schilling	143	144	246	247
Belgium	(100) francs	4,879	4,907	8,376	8,418
Canada	dollar	1,263	1,270	2,168	2,179
Denmark	krone	299	266	454	456
France	franc	305	301	513	516
Germany	mark	1,006	1,012	1,727	1,736
Holland	guilder	893	898	1,533	1,541
Italy	(100) liras	102	103	176	177
Japan	(100) yen	1,510	1,519	2,593	2,606
Sweden	krone	225	227	387	389
UAE	dirham	476	479	818	820
UK	pound	2,840	2,856	4,875	4,899
U.S.	dollar	1,750	1,755	3,000	3,015

TEHRAN TIMES

Sports Summary

Tehran Times Service

CRICKET

Hussain's Double Ton Turns the Screw on Australia

BIRMINGHAM, England: England tightened their stranglehold on the first test after a record-breaking partnership between Nasser Hussain and Graham Thorpe against Australia at Edgbaston here on Friday.

By close of play on the second day, bookmakers were offering odds of 1-12 on England to win the ashes opener with Australia at 50-1.

England ran up a massive 331-run lead before rain brought a halt to proceedings an hour and 20 minutes early.

Hussain hit a stunning 207, surpassing his highest first class score of 197 for Essex against Surrey seven years ago, and with Thorpe (138), put on 288 for the fourth wicket as England reached 449 for six.

TENNIS

Kuerten Gobbles Up Dewulf as Grandma Arrives

PARIS: Brazil's Gustavo Kuerten swept into the men's final at the French Open on Friday.

The 20-year-old South American, who has won the hearts of the French public with his hard-hitting baseline tennis, eccentric playing kit and indelible smile, defeated plucky Belgian qualifier Filip Dewulf in four sets and then revealed that his grandmother had flown into town.

Kuerten now plays Sergi Bruguera in the final.

The 26-year-old Spaniard moved one match away from a third French Open singles crown when he saw off a magnificent challenge from Australia's Patrick Rafter to score a 6-7 (6/8) 6-1, 7-5, 7-6 (7/1) win.

FOOTBALL

Hitzfeld Quits as Dortmund Coach

DORTMUND, Germany: Ottmar Hitzfeld on Friday stepped down as coach of Borussia Dortmund just nine days after guiding them to victory in the European Cup final.

Hitzfeld, who has been at the Rhine Club since 1991, said he was taking up the post of director of sport at the club.

The 48-year-old told a news conference that he had rejected an offer from Spanish giants Real Madrid to stay with Dortmund.

"Real and I were close to an agreement when Borussia made me this offer and I seized the opportunity," Hitzfeld said.

Matthaeus Sacked as Bayern Captain

MUNICH, Germany: Bayern Munich on Friday stripped Lothar Matthaeus of the club captaincy following the publication of a diary by the former German international in which he criticized his old Bayern teammate Jurgen Klinsmann and national coach Berti Vogts.

Bayern said on Friday that Matthaeus was no longer captain "following a meeting with coach Giovanni Trappatoni".

Barcelona Hope to Cling Onto Ronaldo

BARCELONA, Spain: Barcelona President Jose Luis Nunez claims a little-known FIFA rule will force Brazilian star Ronaldo to stay with the Spanish club.

Nunez says the FIFA rule on transfers means Inter Milan will have to negotiate with Barcelona and cannot simply hope to pay the 32 million dollars written into his contract.

"And they haven't said they are willing to negotiate," he said.

Inter Milan President Massimo Moratti announced on Thursday he had struck a deal to buy the 20-year-old striker on a three million dollar a year salary until 2006. The striker would get a 14 million dollar signing-on fee.

ATHLETICS

Johnson Pulls Out of U.S. Trials

BLOOMINGTON, Indiana: Double Olympic champion Michael Johnson will not compete in next week's U.S. championships in Indianapolis, which act as trials for August's world championships in Athens, because of the leg injury he suffered in Sunday's "Fastest Man" showdown with Donovan Bailey.

Johnson's agent Brad Hunt confirmed the news on Friday, saying that the decision to withdraw had been taken after a medical examination in Dallas on Thursday.

The 400m and 200m champion from Atlanta pulled left quadriceps halfway through his 150-meter showdown with Bailey in Toronto.

Johnson's withdrawal means under current rules he cannot now qualify for the U.S. team for Athens.

However, the 29-year-old's coach Clyde Hart said on Friday: "We are not going to campaign for him to be in the team but we hope the rules can be changed."

Christie in Head-to-Head With Bailey

SHEFFIELD, England: Linford Christie will meet Olympic champion Donovan Bailey in a 75,000 dollars winner-takes-all challenge over 150 meters in Sheffield on June 29.

The race has been arranged because of the huge demand to see Britain's greatest sprinter compete in front of a home crowd in what is expected to be his final season.

CYCLING

Colombian Climbs to Victory in the 20th Stage

PASSO DEL TONALE, Italy: Ivan Gotti remained on course to win the Tour of Italy after Friday's 20th stage in the mountains won by Colombian "Chepe" Gonzalez Pico.

Italian Gotti resisted several attacks by second-placed Pavel Tonkov of Russia to keep his pink jersey two days before the end of the tour in Milan.

Iran Takes Control of Group With 1-0 Victory Over Syria

DAMASCUS, Syria — Ali Daie scored the only goal in the 66th minute Friday, giving Iran a 1-0 victory over Syria and control of Asian Group 2 in World Cup qualifying.

Syria went on the offensive in the first half but was efficiently turned away, setting the stage for Daie's game winner.

The victory improved Iran's record to a perfect 3-0-0 and nine points, sending it to next week's second and final phase of the first-round schedule with a six-point lead over Syria and Kyrgyzstan. Only the first-round group winners advance to the second round.

Kyrgyzstan scored its first victory with a 3-0 victory over Maldives in the second game Friday.

Both Syria and Kyrgyzstan have played one less game than Iran, owing to Kyrgyzstan's late arrival in Damascus earlier this week and the postponement of their match. The group is still awaiting FIFA's decision as to whether it will order the game replayed as part of the group's second phase schedule next week in Tehran, or declare Syria the winner by forfeit.



SYRIA (June 6): Syria moves the ball away from Iran during the World Cup France qualifier match between the two teams in Damascus. Iran won the match 1-0.

(AFP PHOTO)

The teams will reassemble in Tehran on Monday.

In the second match Friday, Alexander Korzanov put Kyrgyzstan ahead in the fourth minute and Mir Zneikin and Boso Bov scored five minutes apart to increase the lead to 3-0 by the 29th.

The loss was a victory of sorts for the Maldives, which had been outscored 29-0 in its first two matches. (AP)

Hingis Looking For Second Slam Title

PARIS — After being the youngest player this century to win her first Grand Slam, Martina Hingis is on the verge of becoming the youngest in history to win her second.

She seeks her second Grand Slam in a row this year in Saturday's French Open final against Iva Majoli. A victory would add her name to an illustrious group of Margaret Court, Steffi Graf and Monica Seles as women who have won the Australian and French Open in the same year.

She may lack the power of court, Graf or Seles, but she has an understanding of the game that surpasses all of them at her age.

Hingis won the Australian Open in January to become the youngest Grand Slam winner since 1887, at the age of 16 years, 3 months and 26 days. If she wins Saturday, she will be the youngest winner of two Grand Slams, at barely 16 years, 8 months.

The previous youngest was Lottie Dod, who was 16 years, 10 months when she won her second Wimbledon title in 1888.

Hingis is an overwhelming favorite to win the French Open title over Majoli and take her seventh consecutive tournament and 41st match of the year, including three Hopman Cup victories.

What most people count as the unofficial final for the tournament — Hingis vs. Seles — took place in the semifinals with Hingis winning in three sets.

Seles, who won the French Open three times, knows why Hingis is unbeaten for the year.

"Martina is really good everywhere," she said. "She doesn't have a weakness that you can say 'OK, if I do that, I'll win the point.' That's why she's so good. She's tough mentally."

Hingis became the youngest No. 1 when she took over from Steffi Graf in March, passing Seles as the youngest top-ranked player in history.

Majoli has a victory over Hingis last year, one of Hingis's 16 losses in 1996. However the 19-year-old Croatian lost to her three times since, including a 6-1, 6-3 thrashing in Paris indoors in February.

The 19-year-old Croatian thinks it's possible to win again.

"I just think of her as another player," Majoli said. "I know she's great. She's done so much. She's playing great tennis."

Seeded ninth, Majoli could become the lowest seeded woman player in the Open era to win a French Open title.

The thought doesn't faze her.

"I really have nothing to lose," she said. "I can really just play the best tennis of my life."

Majoli has been battling a cold and said she will get as much rest as possible to be at 100 percent for the final.

"I didn't know what to expect from myself from this tournament," she said. "It's never easy to come back from a surgery."

Hingis said she is still getting therapy on her knee, up to an hour a day. She didn't get much rest Friday, as she and Aranxta Sanchez Vicario lost 10-8 in the fifth set of the women's doubles semifinals against Natasha Zvereva and Gigi Fernandez. The match lasted 2 1/2 hours.

(AP)

Bulls Find the Mailman Delivers on Friday

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah — Karl Malone fired up his Harley Davidson on Friday and didn't stop driving until he'd left tire tracks on the Chicago Bulls' backs.

"It's time for the big guys to step up and be more physical," said Malone, who did just that as the Utah Jazz defeated the Chicago Bulls 104-93 in game three of the National Basketball Association finals.

Malone, who missed two key free throws in the two-point defeat in game one and shot abysmally in game two, was the key to the turnaround.

Malone matched his entire game two scoring output of 20 points with 4:43 left in the first half. He scored nine points and grabbed four rebounds in the fourth quarter to help stop Chicago's comeback bid.

"I had two or three Harleys at home and my little son likes them, too," said Malone, a motorcycle enthusiast. "I was going to get on the one that was kind of quiet, and he shook his head and he liked the other one. That's the one I rode."

Malone, wearing a black tee shirt with the arms slashed off, cruised into the hallways of the Delta Center two hours before the game ready to do business.

(AFP)

Bulgaria Beat Japan 3-1 in World League Volleyball

HIROSHIMA, Japan — Bulgaria shrugged off a first-set deficit to beat Japan on Saturday, chalking up their fifth win from seven games in Group A of the World League Men's Volleyball Tournament.

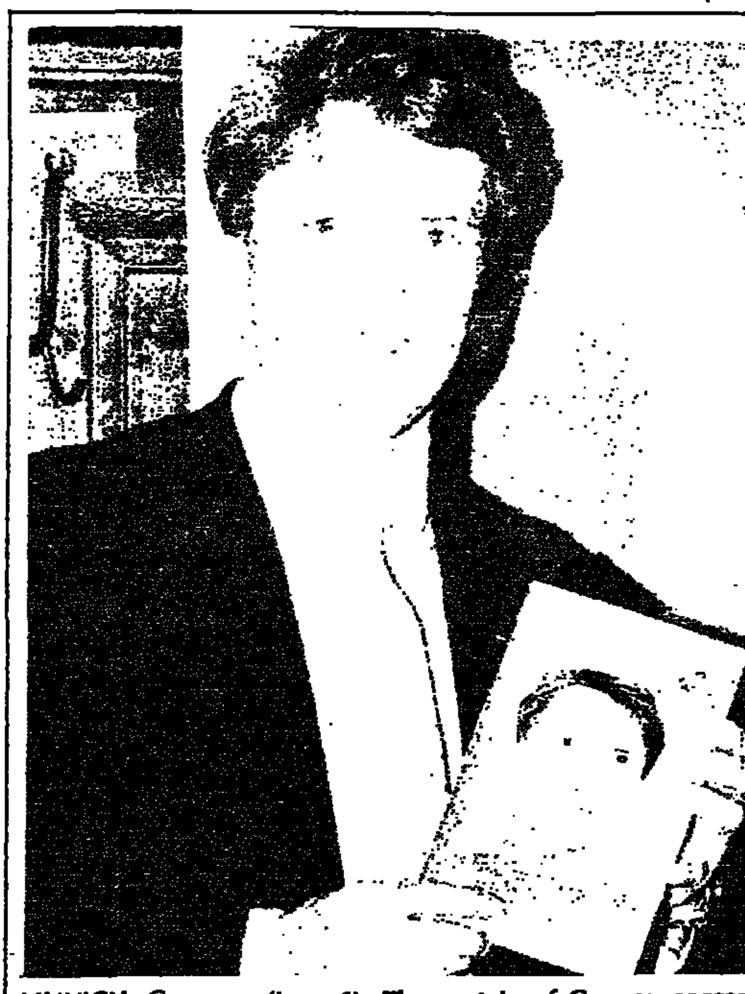
For the Japanese spikers, taking the first set 15-8 was the first set they have won in seven matches.

But Bulgaria, seventh in the Atlanta Olympic Games last year, soon tightened their game to take the following three sets 15-6, 15-12, 15-12.

It was Bulgaria's third win over Japan, following their two three-set wins in Sofia two weeks ago. Bulgaria also have two wins over Argentina while losing to Brazil twice.

It was a humiliating seventh straight defeat for the Japanese, who have also lost twice to Barcelona Olympic champions Brazil and Argentina in the four-team preliminary contest.

(AFP)



MUNICH, Germany (June 6): The captain of German soccer team FC Bayern, Lothar Matthaeus, poses for photos holding his book 'My Diary' during a press conference in Munich. The book is a personal view of the soccer season 1996/97. Soon after the publication today, FC Bayern Munich dismissed Matthaeus from his position as captain of the team. (AFP PHOTO)

Bangladeshi Minister Meets Mohammadi Araqi



Photo: Abbas Kowsari

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The Bangladeshi Consultant Minister for Religious Affairs Mowlana Mohammad Nur-ul-Islam conferred here yesterday with the head of Islamic Propagation Organization Hojjatoleslam Mahmoud Mohammadi Araqi.

Nur-ul-Islam, who is heading a cultural delegation and is on a six-day visit to Iran at the invitation of the Organization of Culture and Islamic Relations, participated in the Thursday ceremonies that marked the eighth demise anniversary of the Late Leader of the Islamic Revolution Imam Khomeini and had meetings with a number of Iranian cultural authorities. He is also expected to visit some cultural centers in the holy city of Qom and Tehran.

During his meeting with Hojjatoleslam Mohammadi Araqi, the two sides discussed ways of exchanging experience in the area of Islamic propagation and called for expansion of cooperation in this regard.

Bangladesh is the second country in terms of largeness of the Muslim population, 90 percent of its population being Muslims.

Tonight, the Bangladeshi delegation is to attend a dinner banquet hosted by the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mostafa Mir-Salim.

(Contd From Pg. 1)

TALEBAN...

fairs, Alauddin Boroujerdi, paid a short visit on Friday to Mazar-i-Sharif in order to talk to the Afghan government officials and convince them that continued bloodshed cannot break the Afghan deadlock. Mazar-i-Sharif is the only Afghan city where the Taleban militia has been forced to retreat in the face of the government forces.

The recent reports from Afghanistan indicate that the government forces have been almost checked in their advance toward Kabul and at some fronts are giving ground to the Taleban militia. It is also reported that the headquarters of Afghan army's second division, which overlooks Jabal-os-Siraj, has fallen to the militia. This, the analysts believe, poses a serious threat to the strategic town.

No matter who will gain the upper hand in the Afghanistan's battlefields in the coming days, it seems that the Taleban are not really committed to peaceful means and are determined to follow their belligerent policy.

If the Taleban's olive-branch was not merely a ploy to buy time to reorganize themselves and consolidate their positions, they should have renounced their belligerent policy when the government forces' advance toward Kabul was checked and should have invited the rival factions to sit at the negotiating table and explore feasible peaceful solutions to the Afghan crisis. However the unfolding of events has thus far proven that the Taleban believe only in one strategy, that is, the military strategy. It is also obvious that the Taleban are not able to carry out their military plans without foreign assistance. But the Afghans will not tolerate foreign interference in their internal affairs for a long time. The Red Army's failure is sufficient evidence.

(Contd From Pg. 1)

NIAZOV...

development of his country and also the region as a whole.

Turkmenistan, like other republics of the Central Asia, is sitting on huge resources of oil and gas but remains almost totally reliant on Moscow for limited use of Russia's pipeline network.

Former senior Communist leader, Niazov has signed trilateral agreements for cooperation in a number of areas with Iran and India and Iran and Azerbaijan.

In 1985, Niazov was appointed Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Turkmenistan and was also elected first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the republic, the highest state and party post.

He highlighted the discussions held in the ECO summit for a comprehensive plan to explore possibilities of transportation, telecommunications, energy and a pipeline network for oil and gas.

"In the beginning (when the Central Asia became independent) such an idea appeared impossible," Niazov said. He talked high about the strategically important geographical situation of the ECO member countries and said these countries can play a crucial role as a gateway between the East and the West for economic and commercial activities.

"God-given wealth such as oil and gas is enormous and this region can rightly boast as being the richest in the world," he said. "Today oil and gas have received priority attention as energy sources for modern economies," he said, stressing that in the 21st century the national economy of the ECO member countries should accordingly go toward this direction accordingly.

To this end the ECO heads of government came to Ashkhabad and agreed on the principles for cooperation in various issues regarding creation of a unique energy system, the president noted.

Naturally, transportation requires infrastructure facilities, including pipeline network, and the ECO participants have paid due attention to these issues, Niazov said. Referring to the final declaration, Niazov said the Ashkhabad summit put more emphasis on transportation and pipeline projects. "Bilateral and multinational cooperation in different areas of cooperation between the ECO members was also discussed," he said, adding that the nature of ties among the ECO countries and other regions in a bid to gain access to the world markets was among other important areas discussed by the participants. Niazov said that the participants agreed to give priority to such projects for translating them into practice.

Ashkhabad meeting provided the necessary motivation for the ECO member states to carry out scientific research and studies.

According to Niazov the two countries have so far concluded 120 contracts calling for all out bilateral cooperation. On economic cooperation, Iran has invested $250 million in Turkmenistan and the two countries have been cooperating in the delivery of Turkmen and Iranian natural gas to Turkey and Europe. Turkey has signed a preliminary accord with Turkmenistan for the purchase of Turkmen gas through a pipeline via Iran.

He further alluded to the Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan railway network saying that world media has called the network the golden chain of the transcontinental links.

He went on saying that the pipeline which continues from Turkmenistan to Iran is one of the world's attractive projects and it is going to be a universally important one.

Regarding the ample potentials for promotion of regional cooperation within the ECO framework, the two countries of Iran and Turkmenistan can play a crucial role in this regard, Niazov noted.

The cooperation between Iran and Turkmenistan does not and will not be confined to just one particular area, he said and hoped for further promotion of ties in all domains. He listed the areas of reciprocal cooperation between Tehran and Ashkhabad as construction of roads, railroads, dams and electricity plants.

Production of construction materials, heavy industries and metal works as well as manufactured goods are among other grounds suitable for future cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Turkmenistan, Niazov concluded.

(Contd From Pg. 1)

UN...

the damages "shall be borne only by Israel." That vote produced 58 in favor, two against, and 52 abstentions.

A U.S. official said that the vote constituted "a train wreck, which will be followed by another train wreck in the General Assembly."

The vote is to be validated by a plenary session of the UN General Assembly later this month. The Assembly invariably confirms committee decisions.

Israeli Charge d'Affaires David Peleg told AFP that "the Lebanese are shooting themselves in the foot" by pressing for adoption of the resolution. "It will weaken unifil," the UN interim force in Lebanon, he said.

The committee decision is part of a resolution focusing on unifil financing.

Arab nations at the United Nations, backed by developing states as a whole, insisted that Israel, and not UN member states collectively, should pay for the damages totalling $1,724,618.

Lebanese civilians were sheltering at the Qana camp during Israel's "Grapes of Wrath" operation against Hezbollah in Lebanon.

A UN report concluded that the Israeli shelling was probably deliberate.

(AFP)

(Contd From Pg. 1)

TAJIK...

also embrace a series of protocols signed earlier in the course of peace talks.

The talks started last December when Rakhmonov's government and Nouri's Islamist opposition agreed on a cease-fire.

(Contd From Pg. 1)

PRESIDENT...

mass destruction, President Rafsanjani said, "we are a new military power, but we hate the nuclear and chemical arms being used by the U.S. and the West. The world witnessed the bravery of our combatants in the course of 8-year long sacred defense (1980-1988) and admired our humane and Islamic treatment of enemy forces on the battlefields."

"Using such weapons is relevant to anti-religious and anti-human cultures of the countries which spare no evil things to reach their illegitimate ends," Rafsanjani pointed out.

"The experience of the eight years of sacred defense has turned Iran into a powerful defensive force. We are invulnerable against any kind of aggression. However, we do not intend to launch aggression on other countries," Hojjatoleslam Rafsanjani said.

On the controversial anti-Iran propaganda concerning freedom of women in Iran, President Rafsanjani said no one can ignore the progress made by Iranian women in scientific, cultural and social areas or the fact that women form half of the university students in Iran and enjoy the same employment opportunities as men.

(IRNA)

(Contd From Pg. 1)

FOUR...

even among FLN supporters who questioned the third-place showing by their party, which led the 1954-62 war for independence from France.

(Contd From Pg. 3)

THE TALIBAN...

take it lying down, the daily said.

Although the Taliban still control three-fourths of the country, once more the Taliban myth has been crushed and once again the peace process jeopardized.

The Taliban mistake is that they never learn from Afghan history, thinking a military solution would provide the answer to Afghanistan's problem.

In a country which historically has never succumbed to force, never surrendered to Britain and Russian might to subjugate it, the Taliban have deceived themselves in thinking the solution was at hand. The Taliban, comprising mainly Pakhtoons, instead of giving the other ethnic groups their due representation in power and evolving a broad-based national government, have tried to impose a military solution, the daily said.

It notes that neighboring central Asian states have expressed their open misgivings about Pakistan's alleged interference in Afghanistan in the recent IOC meeting while Russia still refuses to recognize Pakistan's role in Afghanistan.

It predicts that strong opposition groups, have full backing of Afghanistan's neighbors due to ethnic links, to fight back bitterly. In such a case, no immediate end to the war is visible within miles.

"Pakistan can still salvage its position by using its influence over the Taliban to end the fight and seek a peaceful solution. Consensus, not arms, should be the cornerstone of our policy in the prevalent situation and if Pakistan could succeed in helping to form a national government in Afghanistan comprising other ethnic forces it would be a victory for it and the Taliban," the article concluded.

(Contd From Pg. 1)

IRAQ...

"Turkey has, via various diplomatic and political channels, said it is committed to Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity and at the same time didn't think twice about invading the north of our country," the paper said, condemning Turkish "hypocrisy."

Turkey has sent more than 20,000 soldiers into northern Iraq in an operation launched on May 14 to strike at rear bases of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which is fighting for an independent homeland in southeast Turkey.

(AFP)

(Contd From Pg. 1)

57...

The victims are believed to have been summarily executed.

Ivan Gruic, the Croatian official in charge of the exhumations, said documents from authorities in the town of Lovas indicate 68 bodies would be found at the site.

Croatian authorities claim up to 13 mass graves dot the region, which was seized by rebels in late 1991.

Last year, UN investigators recovered 200 bodies from a nearby grave site in Ovcara. Three Yugoslav Army officers are charged by the UN War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague, Netherlands, for the Ovcara slaughter.

Eastern Slavonia is scheduled to revert to Croatian control this summer.

Serbs there agreed to accept gradual return of Croatian authority after all other areas that rebels seized during the war were recaptured in the summer of 1995.

(AP)

(Contd From Pg. 2)

BOROUJERDI...

peace seeking groups strived for ending clashes and removing factors behind tension in order to save their country. He expressed hope that peace and tranquility would be restored in Afghanistan by God's grace.

He said the policy of Afghan party leaders was based on maintaining favorable and good ties with neighboring states. He assured neighboring countries that they would not allow Afghanistan to be turned into the center of tension for regional states, especially for Central Asian republics.

He added that countries' attitides today would lay the basis for future relations between Afghanistan and them.

He continued that Afghans would never forget today's friendship and enmities, calling seriously on the meddling countries not to interfere in Afghan internal affairs.

Boroujerdi expressed satisfaction over ending of clashes in many parts of northern Afghanistan and said that erruption of tension and clashes in the region was the result of the policies which wrongly pointed to settlement of Afghan problems through military means. This is a policy that would not lead to restoration of tranquility in Afghanistan, he added.

Iran's message for Afghan nation is launching all-out efforts for restoration of peace and calm in their country and Iranian people wait for a day to share happiness with Afghans under peaceful, tranquil, and Islamic atmosphere, hoped the Iranian official.

Boroujerdi said that Iran followed the policy of restoration of peace through negotiations and regional security in the region has a special status in that policy.



Palestinians Fragmented by 30 Years of Occupation

BAIT-UL-MOQADDS — Thirty years of occupation and a stop-start peace process have left Palestinians more fragmented than ever, living under self-rule, partial self-rule, occupation, annexation and in the diaspora.

Even though the West Bank and east Jerusalem were administered by Jordan and the Gaza Strip by Egypt before the six-day war of 1967, Palestinians took it for granted that the land would one day be united.

But Israel's conquest of the territories between June 5 and 10, 1967, and subsequent occupation has left their dream of unity in tatters. The 1993 autonomy accords with Israel have made the situation even worse.

"After all these years living with the dream of liberation, we are disoriented and live in a state of illusion," said Ali Jerbawi, a professor of political science at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank.

"With the signing of the Oslo (autonomy) accord, the Palestinians thought they had obtained something. But they were blinded by illusions because that accord did not achieve their national aspirations," he said.

Between the half-realized promises of freedom and continued occupation in all but name, "Palestinian society lives in a state of schizophrenia," Jerbawi told AFP.

When the Palestinian Authority installed itself in Gaza in May 1994, thousands of Palestinians lined the streets to welcome the new security forces that gave the new self-rule entity an aura of sovereignty.



The handover of West Bank towns to Palestinian Authority at the end of 1995 and the first ever Palestinian general elections in January 1996 reinforced the feeling of euphoria.

But the momentum stopped abruptly with the election of right-wing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu a year ago, leading to a deadlock in the peace process, and with disillusionment in Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority itself.

Since then, the 2.5 million Palestinians in the territories have come to realize that most of them live in cantons, autonomous but separated from each other.

Inhabitants of the Gaza Strip can not travel to the West Bank and vice versa. Most Palestinians can not visit Bait-ul-Moqaddas.

Although Oslo gave Palestinians their first passports, their freedom of movement in the territories is always tightly controlled, even prohibited, by the Israeli army.

West Bank Palestinians are now divided into three areas: autonomous towns labeled "a zones," mixed Palestinian-Israeli controlled regions known as "B zones" and areas under total Israeli occupation called "c Zones."

The new divisions born of the autonomy process came on top of those between the West Bank and east Jerusalem, which was annexed by israel in the 1967 war.

The Palestinians in the holy city became the "Arabs of Jerusalem" in Israeli terminology, whose fate will be negotiated in talks on a final peace settlement, promised in Oslo but already a year late in starting.

Likewise the future of hundreds of thousands of "displaced," who fled the territories in 1967, is uncertain even though the Oslo accord called for a decision on their fate.

Most of the "refugees" that fled the area of present-day Israel during the first Israeli-Arab war in 1948 are dispersed all over the world. Of the six million Palestinians, most live in exile.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erakat acknowledged the "difficulties" of the Palestinian situation but said their hopes of national unity remain intact.

"We live in difficult times, both politically and economically. But that's Israel's fault, whereas the Palestinians, for the first time, have begun constructing their state in spite of all the obstacles," Erakat told AFP.

"After all these years of occupation and oppression, Israel has not succeeded in eliminating the Palestinian people," Erakat said.

(AFP)



Afghan Taleban Seek Talks With Uzbek Commander

ISLAMABAD- Afghanistan's Taleban said on Sunday it was seeking talks with ethnic Uzbek leader Abdul Malik, who handed the purist Islamic movement an easy victory in the north last week only to have his followers snatch it away.

Taleban considers its pact with General Malik still valid and is holding back from serious attacks on Mazar-i-Sharif, the main city of the north, while it tries to make contact, said a statement distributed in neighbouring Pakistan.

Malik has not been heard from since the dramatic reversal of Taleban's brief conquest.

The Taleban governor of the southern city of Kandahar, Mullah Mohammad Akhund, told reporters on Saturday that Malik had taken no part in his followers' revolt against the Taleban.

Taleban sources say they suspect that Malik, if alive, is held prisoner by other Uzbek commanders.

The militia's statement, issued in Kandahar and reported by the Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press, also reminded Uzbek commanders that Taleban leaders captured in Mazar-i-Sharif had been invited there for talks and should not be harmed.

The captives include foreign minister Mullah Mohammed Ghous and military chief for the north Mullah Abdul Razzak.

The whirligig sequence of events in the north began when Malik quarrelled with northern warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum, who was Afghanistan's most powerful anti-Taleban leader.

Malik's forces drove Dostum into exile and brought Mazar-i-Sharif under temporary Taleban control last week, but his Uzbek troops and Shi'ite Muslim militiamen jointly drove Taleban fighters from the city on Wednesday.

Taleban said it had so far conducted only limited air and ground attacks against the opposition in Mazar-i-Sharif, but added that a full-scale military operation might be launched if talks failed.

On Friday, an Uzbek commander named general Humayun Fauzi warned that any ground or air attack on Mazar-i-Sharif could have "dangerous" consequences for the Taleban prisoners.

The Taleban have been rushing reinforcements to their front lines, after being thrown back onto the defensive by their defeat in Mazar-i-Sharif and Friday's capture of the key town of Jabal-os-Siraj by opposition guerrilla chief Ahmad Shah Masood.

(Reuter)

Foreign Policy Marks Starting Positions For Next Elections

WASHINGTON— Contenders in the race to be the first U.S. president of the next century are staking out their positions as they toe the starting line, and foreign policy is dominating the early debates.

Already in the battle to succeed President Bill Clinton in 2000 are vice president Al Gore and house democratic leader Richard Gephardt, who duked it out last week over renewing Beijing's most favored nation trade status.

Gephardt, who rebelled earlier this year by voting against Clinton's budget, opposes the president's decision to maintain normal trade relations with China, whose government he denounced as "a tyranny that debases the dignity of one-fifth of the human race."

Gore delivered a trade address the day of Gephardt's attack, defending Clinton's policy of engagement with China as the only hope of influencing Beijing, sure to be one of the biggest U.S. concerns in the 21st century.

Gephardt, a boyish-looking southern lawmaker like Gore, may next try to distinguish himself from the White House duo by raising questions about the administration's drive to include Chile in a regional trade pact.

Congress is soon to consider "fast track" authority for Chile's membership in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) joining the United States, Mexico and Canada.

Many democrats fiercely opposed NAFTA, charging it would hurt labor and the environment, and Gephardt intends to raise those issues again, his aide said.

"He doesn't support fast track unless the environment and labor safeguards are factored in," said spokesman Eric Smith, who hinted that Gephardt may also make trouble over Clinton's cherished goal to expand NATO.

The Missouri representative and 1988 White House contender "has concerns on the cost and the reaction of the Russians," Smith said, adding however that Gephardt generally supports NATO expansion.

So far, no one on the Republican side has such clear designs on the White House as Gephardt and Gore, but the favorite target for speculation is the wildly popular former top military chief, Collin Powell.

Like Gephardt, the black general set himself apart by breaking with party members, first backing the affirmative action program for hiring minorities and then supporting the chemical weapons ban.

Other foreign policy issues would likely dominate a Powell platform given his military background, and they may also surface in the expected bids from immigration-foe pat Buchanan and anti-NAFTA Ross perot.

With the economy booming and the crime rate dropping, politicians are apparently looking overseas for inspiration.

Political analyst Norman Ornstein said that zeroing in on foreign policy issues may be a good strategy as those areas are credited with the surprising support for Perot and Buchanan.

He also noted that Gephardt has long had a populist protectionist stance, it's his emphasis that's changed.

"As a member of the leadership then he took a less visible role and downplayed his differences with the party," said the American enterprise institute expert. "Now clearly he's not downplaying anything."

"Gephardt is trying to find his sea legs for a possible presidential run and so he's doing the politics he thinks he needs to do," agreed a White House official who declined to be named.

(AFP)

Man Survives Six-Story Jump, Kills Saviour

MANAMA — A man jumped out of a sixth floor window of an apartment block in Manama and survived ... but killed a Bahraini man sleeping below, the local press reported Saturday.

The victim, a 55-year-old Bahraini car washer, died in hospital of internal haemorrhaging

The man who jumped, a 33-year-old Arab, was taken to hospital with various injuries.

(AFP)

Fortune-Teller Bilks Teen of $54,000

MOSCOW — A fortune-teller managed to bilk a 14-year-old Moscow teenager of $54,000 by promising to resolve all of her gullible victim's problems, the daily Komsomolskaya Pravda reported Monday.

The paper said the teenager was on her way to school when a woman stopped her and promised to predict her future.

The young woman proceeded to put her hands on the $54,000 her parents had put aside to purchase a new apartment and gave them to the fortune teller who ran off with the money.

(AFP)

Chirac Breaks Silence Over Election Debacle

LILLE, France — President Jacques Chirac pledged Saturday to work closely with new Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, but he warned that he would accept no watering-down of his presidential powers.

It was rightwinger Chirac's first public statement since the upset June 1 general election which saw the rout of his coalition government and the arrival in power of a new left-wing government under Jospin.

The two men are sharing power under a political arrangement known in France as cohabitation.

"Since the last week we have been operating under what we know as cohabitation," Chirac said in a speech to a congress of health care insurers.

"I have already experienced this particular kind of institutional arrangement. It was in 1986. I was prime minister.

"I was able then to appreciate the fundamental role played by the president of the republic as the Guardian of French Institutions," he added.

Chirac outlined what he said were his presidential duties in safeguarding domestic and foreign policy priorities and said that he was determined to carry them out.

In particular, he mentioned social cohesion and the maintainence of republican ideals at home, and European integration, foreign trade and high technology abroad.

Chirac has been widely blasted for making a major political blunder in calling the snap general election in which he was seeking to renew the parliamentary majority of his center-right coalition for the remaining five years of his presidential term.

(AFP)

Israeli-Palestinian Meeting Denied

BAIT-UL-MOQADDAS — Israel denied on Saturday a meeting had been set between Israeli and Palestinian representatives for Sunday (today) in Cairo.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's spokesman issued the denial hours after Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa announced the two sides would meet to discuss the impasse in peacemaking prompted by Israel's settlement building.

"The idea of a meeting tomorrow between Israeli and Palestinian respresentatives was raised but no meeting has been set," said Shai Bazak.

"The contacts aimed at reviving peace talks continue," he told Reuters.

Moussa spoke to reporters after Palestinian President Yasser Arafat briefed Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo on his latest contacts with the Israelis. He said Arafat had met on Friday with an adviser to Netanyahu.

Egypt has stepped up mediation efforts since a summit between Mubarak and Netanyahu last month.

The Sunday meeting would centre on "important points connected with the peace process, including settlements", Moussa said, adding that Netanyau's adviser gave Arafat new Israeli ideas to break the deadlock in talks.

He did not name the Israeli adviser or the experts who will take part in the Cairo meeting but said an Egyptian representative would attend as an observer.

Israel-PLO peace talks plunged into crisis in March when Netanyahu launched a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Bait-ul-Moqaddas.

Diplomatic sources said on Friday Egypt and the Palestinians were working on a five-point plan which includes a freeze on any change in the status of Bait-ul-Moqaddas and a ban on Jewish settlement of the West Bank for "a sufficient period".

In return the Palestinians would give a firm commitment to address Israel's security demands, they added.

But Bazak denied reports Israel was willing to halt construction at the East Bait-ul-Moqaddas settlement site which Israel calls Har Homa and Arabs refer to as Jabal abu Ghneim.

Burundi's Toppled President Leaves U.S. Embassy

BUJUMBURA — Burundi's ousted civilian President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya left the U.S. Embassy in the capital Bujumbura on Saturday after taking refuge there almost a year ago, government officials and witnesses said.

"The decision to allow former President Ntibantunganya to leave the U.S. Embassy...will be in the national interest," said a statement from the presidency.

"Both the government and President Ntibantunganya have contributed a lot to reach the outcome," it added.

Ntibantunganya's freedom immediately underlined Burundi's sharp ethnic divide, with majority ethnic Hutus celebrating but many among the minority Tutsis grumbling about the terms.

On Saturday morning Ntibantunganya, accompanied by the U.S. ambassador, visited the office and residence the government has provided for him in a wealthy surburb of Bujumbura.

(Reuter)

Irish Election to Produce Hung Parliament



DUBLIN — Ireland's voters appear to have elected a hung Parliament with neither of the two rival coalitions able to form a majority government, according to a survey of counts in all 41 constituencies by party activists.

They showed that the opposition Fianna Fail Party would emerge the strongest party but its electoral ally, the Progressive Democrats (PDS) of Mary Harney, seemed poised to lose several of its eight parliamentary seats.

The unofficial counts, conducted by so-called tallymen working for political parties, confirmed earlier predictions that Prime Minister John Bruton's three-party coalition would not be returned to government.

The Labour Party, Bruton's key ally, appeared to be the biggest loser in the election and could drop up to nine of its 32 parliamentary seats, the tallymen's count suggested.

Bruton's own Fine Gael Party was faring well as the count continued but its support was estimated in the high 20 percent range against some 45 percent for Fianna Fail, which is led by former Finance Minister Bertie Ahern.

The count also suggested that Sinn Fein, political wing of the outlawed Irish Republican Army, would win a seat in the border Cavan Monaghan Constituency, and gain a foothold in Ireland's Parliament for the first time since the nation's birth in the 1920s.

(Reuter)

Riot Police Unit Expanded in Hunt for Japanese Boy's Killer

TOKYO — Japanese police expanded a combat team Saturday to hunt a killer who beheaded an 11-year-old boy in Kobe, while looking for clues in a letter believed to be sent from the criminal.

Launching a new team with scores of reinforcements from other western Japan precincts, Hyogo prefectural police vowed to prevent further crimes.

"The murder is a serious case that has shaken the country's social safety," a Hyogo police spokesman quoted Hayao Kashiwagi, head for civil life, as telling the new unit.

Police in Hyogo, where Kobe is located, did not disclose the exact number of officers mobilized in the hunt for the killer of Jun Hase, whose head was found in front of a Kobe junior high school on May 27. His decapitated corpse was found nearby.

More than 500 detectives were already known to be working on the case.

The *Kobe Shimbun* has disclosed a disturbing hate-filled letter believed to be from the killer to the local daily. The writer claimed responsibility for the brutal killing, while hinting at more murders.

A special investigation team at Kobe police believe the killer may have struck before, finding eerie similarities between the case of Hase and a series of unsolved murders in the United States in the 1960s, Jiji Press said.

(AFP)

Kuwait Urges Calm After MP Assassination Attempt

KUWAIT — Kuwait's government on Saturday urged parliamentarians debating the attempted assassination of an opposition MP to avoid saying things that could stir internal strife.

"Please do not pour petrol on the fire. Starting a fire would not only harm us but will harm the whole of Kuwait," the Tiny Persian Gulf state's acting Premier and Foreign Minister, Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, told Parliament.

Leading liberal MP Abdullah al-Naibari, a government critic, was in hospital after unidentified gunmen shot him and his wife on Friday. Relatives and officials said they were in good condition.

Several MPs linked the attack to charges in Parliament that former officials mismanaged and squandered public funds. Naibari played a key role in efforts to combat corruption.

(Reuter)

Erbakan Rejects Turkish Military Claims on Incursion Funding

ANKARA, Turkey — Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, who has been feuding with the military over his pro-Islamic policies, on Saturday rejected a general's claims that his government wasn't coming through with funding for the anti-Kurdish offensive in northern Iraq.

"There has been no inadequacy in meeting the military's needs," said Erbakan.

On Friday, Gen. Erol Ozkasnak, secretary general of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters that his office's requests for additional funds required for the operation went unanswered.

Erbakan said he would meet with military and Finance Ministry officials to sort out the problems.

Tensions between the powerful military and Erbakan have been running high, and while the prime minister was dismissing the complaint as unfounded, aides in his pro-Islamic Welfare Party were trying to soften the edge.

State Minister Abdullah Gul said the prime minister had ordered release of funds as soon as the military request came in.

And Deputy Prime Minister Tansu Ciller, leader of the center-right True Path Party and the coalition's pro-secular partner, hastened to add that if there were any "shortcomings" in meeting the military's needs, those would be discovered and provided speedily.

The military and the government are at loggerheads. (AP)

Morocco Arrests 67 Opposition Activists

RABAT — Moroccan police arrested 67 opposition political activists for their campaign to boycott local elections due on June 13, a human rights group said on Saturday.

"A group of 67 militants, members of the opposition Avant-garde Democratique Socialiste Party (PADS), were arrested by police in 10 provinces while campaigning for the boycott of communal elections," a spokesman for the independent Moroccan Human Rights Association said.

Among Morocco's dozen active parties, the PADS was the only opposition group to call for the boycott of local elections.

"Most of the arrested militants will be presented before the court of justice and tried next week," the spokesman said. (Reuter)



MOGADISHU, Somalia: Salaad Hussan Ali, 23, shows his knee which he cannot bend in Mogadishu after Italian paratroopers taking part in the 1993 U.S.-led military operation in Somalia tortured prisoners by starving them and giving the electric shocks and cigarette burns, an Italian magazine reported yesterday.

(AFP PHOTO)



Unemployment Rate Sinks to 24-Year Low in May



WASHINGTON — The nation's unemployment rate dropped to 4.8 percent in May, a level last seen a quarter of a century ago.

Wall Street cheered, sending stock prices to record levels despite talk the strong economy will push interest rates up.

After four consecutive monthly declines, the jobless rate is now the lowest since November 1973, the Labor Department said Friday.

"Anyone who wants to work pretty much can, given a modicum level of skills and training," said economist Mark Zandi of Regional Financial Associates in West Chester, Pennsylvania.

"That's pretty much across the country, from Boston to San Francisco, and across industries," he said. "Employers are increasingly having a difficult time finding unemployed people who want to work."

That's not to say that everyone has benefited equally. The May rate was 3.8 percent for adult men and 4.5 percent for adult women. But for teens it was 15.6 percent and for black teens, 33.2 percent. For all blacks, the rate was 10.3 percent, for Hispanics, 7.4 percent, and for whites, 4 percent.

"While there is much to celebrate about the economy, we must work to ensure that everyone shares in this economic prosperity," said Sen. Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico, noting that unemployment in his home state appears stuck at 6.5 percent.

Bond prices initially tumbled in reaction to the report. The fear is that tight labor markets will cause employers to bid up wages and then raise product prices to compensate - and that the Federal Reserve will seek to dampen inflation pressures by raising short-term interest rates.

However, Wall Street soon shrugged off the inflation worries, apparently reassured in part by a soothing comment from Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin.

"Everything that I see suggests to me the probability is very high that inflation will remain at low levels," he told reporters.

By midafternoon, the Dow Jones average of 30 industrial stocks had advanced 107 points to 7,413, surpassing at least temporarily the record close of 7,383 on May 27.

Demand for bonds pushed the yield on the 30-year treasury bond down to 6.80 percent, from 6.87 percent Thursday.

The May drop in unemployment — which wasn't anticipated by most economists — set off a round of happy comments from the Clinton administration.

"America's economy is the strongest it has been in a generation," President Bill Clinton declared in a statement.

Vice President Al Gore, in an interview, said, "It's a(n) ... economy with unemployment going down to the lowest level since the first OPEC oil crisis."

Both attributed the longevity of the six-year U.S. economic expansion, the second-longest in peacetime history, and the 12.3 million new jobs created since Clinton took office to the administration's success at shrinking the budget deficit from a record $290 billion in 1992 to a projected $80 billion this year.

Republicans, though, claim credit for forcing the administration to agree to balance the budget by 2002.

Meanwhile, the Labor Department said payrolls rose modestly in May, by 138,000 jobs, the smallest increase in eight months. However, that followed a large 323,000 gain in April, the largest in 14 months.

Much of the May job gains came in services, including recreation, hotels, health care, computer and data processing, trucking, air transportation, finance and real estate.

Workers' average hourly earnings rose four cents to $12.19, some 3.8 percent higher than a year ago.

EU, Unions, Employers Reach Deal on Part-Time Work

BRUSSELS — European Union officials, labor and employers groups on Friday formally endorsed a deal on rules to guarantee rights to part-time workers, which was initialled by representatives of workers and employers on May 14.

"By facilitating access to part-time work, this agreement constitutes a major step towards greater flexibility of work," the head of the EU Employers' Confederation UNICE, Francois Perigot, said in a statement.

Perigot added that flexibility was fundamental to improving the competitiveness of European businesses and creating jobs.

The voluntary agreement, which seeks to encourage part-time work by giving part-time workers the same rights as their full-time colleagues, was formally approved at a meeting in The Hague between the European Commission, the Dutch Presidency and the heads of UNICE, the trade union group ETUC and the public employers group CEEP.

EU governments will now be asked to approve the seven- clause deal, which commits them to removing discrimination and other obstacles facing workers with a part-time contract.

The accord does not cover people doing other atypical types of work, such as temporary or seasonal jobs, or working from home, but it recognizes the need to broker a similar arrangement for these people.

The accord allows employers not to give the same benefits to casual workers, but only so long as there are objective reasons for doing so, and prevents them sacking full-timers who refuse to switch to part-time work.

The trades unions and employers' groups — the so-called social partners — agreed in June 1996 to open talks on rights for part-time workers after the European Commission asked them to consider ways of ensuring that employees in a broad range of flexible jobs did not face discrimination.

Friday's agreement is the second piece of legislation to be worked out under the Maastricht Treaty's social protocol, which gives the social partners the right to strike a deal and then ask the council of ministers to turn it into EU law.

Trades unions and CEEP representatives were unavailable for comment on the part-time work accord.

(Reuter)

World Bank Could Lend Russia $6bn Over Two Years

WASHINGTON — The World Bank announced Friday it could lend as much as $6 billion to Russia under a new two-year country strategy.

As a first instalment, it said, six loans worth $884.6 million would be made available to support sectoral economic reforms, as well as to promote improvements in health, education, economic analysis, business restructuring and electricity supply.

"Russia is at the crossroads of its economic reform program," said Johannes Linn, bank vice president for Europe and Central Asia.

"We have a tremendous opportunity to help accelerate Russia's economic recovery..."

"As long as the government pushes ahead with accelerated reform efforts, we are prepared to expand our assistance to $6 billion over the next two years.

"These first six loans will firmly lay the first phase of our future financial and advisory assistance to Russia."

The bank in a statement hailed a reduction in Russia's monthly inflation rate to below two percent for the past 12 months, a privatization of productive assets that account for nearly 70 percent of gross domestic product and a trade surplus of $24 billion last year.

It said the most urgent reforms facing Russia were in the administration of the tax authority and in the collection of revenue, along with an expansion of the private sector, a strengthening in the social safety net and the elimination of restrictions on agricultural trade and marketing.

The bank acknowledged that its strategy carried "significant" risks, notably as "economic performance remains fragile and inflationary expectations continue to remain high."

In addition, it warned that "the political credibility of the reform process will be tested in the face of opposition from strong vested interest groups."

Including the just approved loans totalling nearly $885 million, the World Bank has committed around $7.5 billion to Russia since it joined the institution in June 1992.

(AFP)

Venezuela Pulls in $2.17 bn in Oilfield Concessions

CARACAS — Venezuela raked in more than $2.17 billion this week from a series of auctions of 20-year concessions for secondary oil recovery on 18 fields.

Union Texas of the United States and Germany's Preussag Energy jointly made the winning bid of $174.7 million Friday for the Boqueron field in eastern Venezuela in the last of 20 auctions this week.

Argentina's Compania General de Combustibles (CGC) and Canada's Carmanah earlier Friday were awarded the concession for the Onado field with 130 million barrels for $90.2 millione.

Two of the fields in the northwestern sector of Lake Maracaibo that were placed on the block elicited no interest and remain in the hands of the state-owned Petroleos de Venezuela (PDVSA) holding company.

The bids for the other 18 fields brought in twice what PDVSA officials had expected, in what executive Vicenzo Paglione said was "a nice surprise for the country."

PDVSA estimates Venezuela's oil output will increase by 500,000 barrels per day from the current three million with the new production from fields in concession.

The fields, rich in light and medium density petroleum, require more investment to make them productive than PDVSA could commit to, company executives said.

PDVSA has decided "to make an full effort to develop more attractive fields and combine that production with other types of development, such as these contracts," said Juan Szabo, president of the Venezuelan Oil Corporation, the PDVSA subsidiary handling the concessions.

Winning bidders are required to invest just under $15 million each over three years in the fields, but most have said they would make investments of around 100 million.

Earlier this week Britain's Lasmo won a 20-year contract to run an oil field in northeastern Venezuela for $453 million.

Preussag Energy offered $500,000 for the Cabimas field on the northeastern shore of Lake Maracaibo and a pan-Canadian Petroleum/Pennzoil exploration production consortium offered $1.3 million in the only bid for a third 20-year contract.

(AFP)

Clairvoyants Take a Peek at Secretive Swiss Banks

GENEVA — Ever wondered how to catch sight of the secret, numbered Swiss bank accounts of fallen dictators like Zaire's Mobutu Sese Seko or the Philippines' Ferdinand Marcos?

Forget conventional means, for the vaults of secretive Swiss banks are out of reach of prying eyes.

But another Swiss growth industry provided some other-worldly answers — at an international exhibition of mediums and clairvoyants last month in Geneva, home to the nation's richest private banks and more than 500 soothsayers.

But another Swiss growth industry provided some other-worldly answers — at an international exhibition of mediums and clairvoyants last month in Geneva, home to the nation's richest private banks and more than 500 soothsayers.

Clairvoyants said they could lay open the bank vaults and take a peek, albeit with the help of cards, pendulums, tarots and sometimes even just by gazing deeply into the client's eyes.

At times, it seemed only those endowed with supernatural powers could hope to unravel the labyrinths of the Swiss banks.

"I see money in the direction of Lausanne. I see a bank facing Lake Geneva. Inside, I see red carpets and worried bankers," intoned Arlenne, asked about the whereabouts of Mobutu's millions.

"I see bank vaults. There are big sums of cash. But I also see jewelry, gold and title deeds," said the French medium.

Fixing her piercing blue eyes into the horizon, she added: "I see a plane on a tarmac. I see people coming here to take the money out. There is a woman involved. A Zairean woman."

Mediums say they can locate money with cosmic energy

Switzerland has blocked Mobutu's assets in response to a demand from a prosecutor in the Democratic Republic of Congo, as Zaire is now called.

Swiss media estimate Mobutu may have squirreled away in Swiss banks up to $4 billion looted from his mineral-rich African country, but banking authorities will not confirm this.

Letting her pendulum circle over the Zodiac signs on her desk, Arlenne offered the assurance: "The money is here. If people ask me, I can locate it with the help of cosmic energy."

Much has been said about the life and times of the deposed Zairean dictator, but little as alarming as that revealed through the mystical powers of the tarot cards of Madame Marina on the relationship between Mobutu and Swiss banks.

The first two tarot cards pulled by this correspondent for Mobutu's lot in life were money and war.

But the third, slapped down triumphantly by Madame Marina, put Mobutu well and truly beyond the pale: the image of the devil.

Madame Marina, a wry and sprightly 80-year-old Polish refugee, had more shocks in store. The tarot cards for the Swiss banks likewise had disturbing revelations.

After two cards denoting power and wealth, she turned over the image of the victim, the man hanging from a tree.

Could it be that Swiss banks will get their fingers burnt in another legal wrangle as Mobutu struggles to keep his hands on his assets, like the court battles raging over Marcos's millions?

"Money Will Not Bring Happiness to Swiss Banks"

French medium Julien gazed deeply into the wallpaper as if for inspiration, past the Swiss couples looking anxiously across the formica table tops at each other, sipping soft drinks and waiting their turn.

"Money will not bring happiness to Swiss banks," he said.

"But don't expect to get a scoop out of me because these are state secrets in Switzerland. I cannot reveal what I've seen because it would amount to espionage."

The issue of Mobutu's fortunes comes at a time when Switzerland is trying to repair an image tarnished by its dealings with Nazi Germany and Jewish claims that its banks are sitting on the dormant assets of Jews allegedly killed by Hitler.

Madame Marina, whose first husband, a Polish Jew, died in World War II, said her husband's Jewish family had deposited money in Swiss banks during the war.

She said her pendulum has always showed her husband's family had money in Swiss banks but admitted even her mystical powers were not strong enough against the material power of money.

"Numbers have big powers. Just think how many trillions you can make just by using the numbers zero to nine. This creates a special power for people who deal with money," she said.

For some clairvoyants at the exhibition, the burden of Swiss banking secrecy laws lay too heavily upon them.

"Mobutu has a lot of money here. It involves powerful people who know a lot," said French medium Paul des Templiers.

"But don't expect to get a scoop out of me because these are state secrets in Switzerland. I cannot reveal what I've seen because it would amount to espionage."

(Reuter)

California's Marijuana Clubs Remain Outlaws Despite 'Legalization'

SAN FRANCISCO — The strains of Sitar music mingle with the smoke of the cannabis cultivators cooperative, a '60s-style bistro where the menu lists eight grades of "top quality" marijuana.

A glass counter displays the best sellers: marijuana-filled brownies, peanut butter cookies, "merry pills," Ronrico rum bottles and glossy red-and-green boxes bearing the club's Phoenix and Amigo brands.

"We call it the pharmaceutical night club," said Tracy Williams, 30, who is paralyzed and often travels nearly 60 miles (95 kilometers) from his Santa Cruz home for the drug he smokes to ease his muscle spasms.

Since California legalized medical marijuana in November, the state's marijuana clubs have evolved from black market drug dens to bona fide cannabis retailers. They pay taxes, take bank cards and register patients.

But the state's ill-defined medical marijuana statute still makes outlaws of buyers clubs. Patients, who come in wheelchairs, on canes and bearing the purple kaposi's sarcoma marks of AIDS sufferers, risk arrest daily in the effort to ease their pain.

"I've known two people who have been busted in the last few weeks," said San Franciscan Jay Segal, 48, who smokes marijuana to relieve the side-effects of AIDS drugs. "The funny thing is that the right-wingers all say marijuana leads to crime. Look around you — a lot of stoners (marijuana users) laying on couches. This is crime?"

At least a dozen clubs have opened in California. But the law's silence on key questions has led to varying enforcement from city to city, arrests of patients, federal agents threatening doctors, black market deals between growers and buyers clubs and the federal raid of a San Francisco club.

The November citizen referendum, Proposition 215, as of January 1 legalized marijuana possession by anyone with a doctor's recommendation. But transporting it — even to the user's home — remains illegal.

Authorities are grappling with such unanswered questions as whether smoking in clubs violates state anti-smoking statutes, whether cultivating the drug off of club grounds remains a felony and whether sales between grower and club are illegal.

Even clubs that comply with a conservative interpretation of the law by growing their supplies on site break the law by buying black-market seeds, according to state and federal authorities.

Helen, 79, who asked that her last name not be used, risks a prison term each time she carries a bag of low-grade marijuana on the two-hour drive from the San Francisco club to her home in Sacramento. The marijuana cookies she bakes allow her 79-year-old husband, Norman, to sleep through the pain of a condition that leaves nerves exposed.

"At least he sleeps," she said, standing out in her neatly pressed suit near a shirtless man with a necklace of cannabis leaves. "I don't care what the federal government says, it has helped this man."

Downstairs, club manager Dennis Peron talked to an intermediary about taking on a new supplier for the 40 pounds (18 kilograms) of marijuana the club's nearly 4,000 members go through each week. Asked if such deals are legal, he shrugged.

Prosecutors in each region are making up the law as they go along, creating a policies in one city that are often forbidden in the next.

In San Francisco, nearly everything goes. In San Jose, one of the city's two new pharmacy-like buyers clubs was closed under a zoning law. Prosecutors say state law bans smoking at the remaining site. And Santa Clara County considers transportation of marijuana illegal.

The difference between local views on the law pales in comparison to the gulf between local, state and federal officials. State Attorney General Dan Lungren and Sacramento authorities say clubs don't qualify as the "primary caregivers" the law permits to cultivate the drug.

(AP)

U.S. Congress Grants Mother Teresa Gold Medal

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Congress on Thursday awarded Mother Teresa of Calcutta the highest civilian distinction at a ceremony witnessed by several hundred lawmakers.

Mother Teresa, 86, received the congressional gold medal for her work with the poor of Calcutta, India where she founded the Missionaries of Charity Religious Order.

The ailing, Albania-born nun, 86, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979.

Mother Teresa suffers from heart problems and since last August she has been hospitalized three times, for her heart, an attack of malaria and pneumonia.

(AFP)

IMAM Hossein IBN ALI (AS)

PART 24

They held an emergency meeting to discuss the mounting tension in Kufa and the responsibility they should take vis-a-vis the change in the government, after Yazid bin Mu'awiyah had taken the affairs of the ummah into his own hands. Sulaiman bin Sird al-Khuza'i, at whose house the meeting was held, delivered a speech. He informed the gathering of Imam Hossein's (AS) announcement of his opposition to Yazid and that he rejected him as a legitimate caliph. He told them that Imam Hossein (AS) was in Mecca, and since they were his followers and helpers they had to do something. If they were able to support and back him, sparing no effort in doing that, they had to inform him of their position. But were they unable to live up to their principles, it would be most incorrect to write to him and then fail him when the best comes to the worst.

The Shi'ites who were present at the meeting declared their full support to the Imam. They would defend him by any means available. "We fight his enemy and kill ourself defending him," they vowed.

After reaching a consensus on this point, the leading men of Kufa wrote a letter in which they declared their total and final rejection of the Ummayyed rule and that they knew no substitute for Imam Hossein (AS). Then letters poured in from Kufa carrying the urgent call of the Kufans for Imam Hossein (AS) to join them, to take office as the caliphate and Imam of the Muslims. The wave of support for Imam Hossein (AS) was so massive that a list of the tribes waiting for his arrival, totalling 100,000 fighters, was prepared.

After studying these letters, Imam Hossein (AS) concluded that it was necessary to send an envoy to Kufa authorized to take the pledge of allegiance from the people of Iraq, on his behalf, and campaign for the sake of rallying the people around Ahlul-Bailt, represented at the time by Imam Hossein (AS).

Imam Hossein chose his counsin, Muslim bin Aqeel, for this mission. The man was known for his piety, courage, and high qualifications in thought and leadership. He would be able to steer the wave of enthusiasm for the interest of the faith.

With him, Imam Hossein (AS) dispatched a special letter to the people there, and particularly their chiefs. He explianed the qualifications of his envoy, and the nature of his mission. He was to closely examine the situation and describe precisely what was going on there.

Following is the full text of the letter:

"In the Name of Allah, the Beneficient, the Merciful...

From Hossein bin Ali,

To the leaders of the believers and the Muslims.

Hani and Sa'id have brought me your letters; they are the last two of your messengers who have come to me. I have understood eveything which you have described and mentioned. The essential statement of the majority of you is 'We have no Imam. Therefore come; through you, may Allah unite us under truth and guidance'. I am sending you my brother, Muslim bin Aqeel, who is my cousin and trustworthy representative from my house. I ordered him to write to me about your conditions, affairs and views. If he writes to me that the opinion of your leaders and of the men of wisdom and merit among you is united in the same way as the messengers who have come to me have described, and as I have read in your letters, I will come to you at once, Allah willing. By my life, what is the Imam except one who professes the religion of truth, and one who dedicates himself to the essence of Allah, and Salam."

Kufa welcomed Muslim as any loyal and dutiful following would. The pledge of allegiance was taken for Imam Hossein (AS). Ibn Aqeenl, by now, was convinced that the change was on behalf of Ahlul-Bait (AS) and the Message of Allah, the exalted. It was by no means smething common and could not be ignored. It was a truth, tangible and subjective. They should quickly deal with the situation before something happens and spoils the situation.

And so Muslim, may Allah be pleased with him, saw it fit to dispatch an account to Imam Hossein (AS) about the direction of the de facto situation. In his account he called him to come to Kufa. He wrote:

"Certainly, the man sent by a caravan in a desert to explore the way ahead of it will never lie to those who had sent him. All the people of Kufa are with you. Eighteen thousand of them have given their pledge of allegiance to me. So make haste and come to us as soon as you read this letter of mine. And peace and the blessings of Alah be on you."

(To be contd)



هكذا من الأصل



Study: Even a Little Pollution May Kill

LONDON — People in cities are dying from levels of air pollution that are well-below accepted national and international standards, researchers reported on Friday.

Klea Katsouyanni of the University of Athens and researchers from 12 European cities looked at the effects of sulphur dioxide and black smoke on health.

Their findings, reported in the British medical journal, showed that even at current accepted levels pollution still affects health and kills people. Further reductions in levels are needed, they said.

"This is the first time there is a large coordinated study on air pollution effects on mortality whereby we combined 12 cities using exactly the same protocols and confirm the conclusions that have been reported for single cities," Katsouyanni said in a telephone interview.

"There is a measurable effect of relatively high air pollution levels on mortality, which is a very important effect."

But Katsouyanni said the "relatively high" pollution levels are really not high and are well below accepted national and international standards. "If we reported this 10 years ago I think people would not have believed us."

The researchers studied data from Athens, Barcelona, Bratislava, Cracow, Cologne, Lodz, London, Lyons, Milan, Paris, Poznan and Wroclaw, covering over 23 million people.

Katsouyanni said countries are currently reassessing the accepted levels for air pollution, and pollution has declined from peak levels of the late 1950s and 60s.

But now the mixes and sources of air pollution have changed and it is still not known if the new levels, although lower, are more toxic. Scientists have only started to study the new mixes and levels in the last decade, she added.

"We tried to find the relationship between an increase in the air pollutants we studied and the associated increase in mortality. This is consistent in Western cities," she said.

In cities where there was a higher level of pollution the researchers discovered an associated or percentage increase in mortality.

The researchers also found that pollution and smog seem to be more deadly to Western Europeans than to Eastern Europeans.

Although air pollution can cause a three percent increase in daily deaths in Western European cities, that number was less than half in central Eastern Europe.

They found daily mortality went up by three percent in Western European cities as pollution went up, but only 0.6 to 0.8 percent in the Eastern European cities.

"It was an unexpected finding," said Katsouyanni, adding the results could be attributable to how the meaurements were taken or other cultural differences. More studies are needed, she added.

Last week Italian researchers reported finding a strong association between air pollution levels and deaths from cancer. And German researchers said they had found air pollution can make the blood thicker — more viscous — which can cause heart attacks.

(Reuter)



1 in 5 Takes Aspirin to Prevent Heart Attacks

ATLANTA — U.S. health officials said on Thursday that at least one in five older adults takes aspirin daily to reduce the risk of a heart attack, even though the overall health benefits of doing so are questionable.

The centers for disease control and prevention said surveys in two states of 1,685 people aged 45 and over found that 23.3 percent were taking aspirin to reduce their chances of a heart attack or stroke. The percentage who took aspirin daily or every other day increased with age, rising to one in three among those 75 and older.

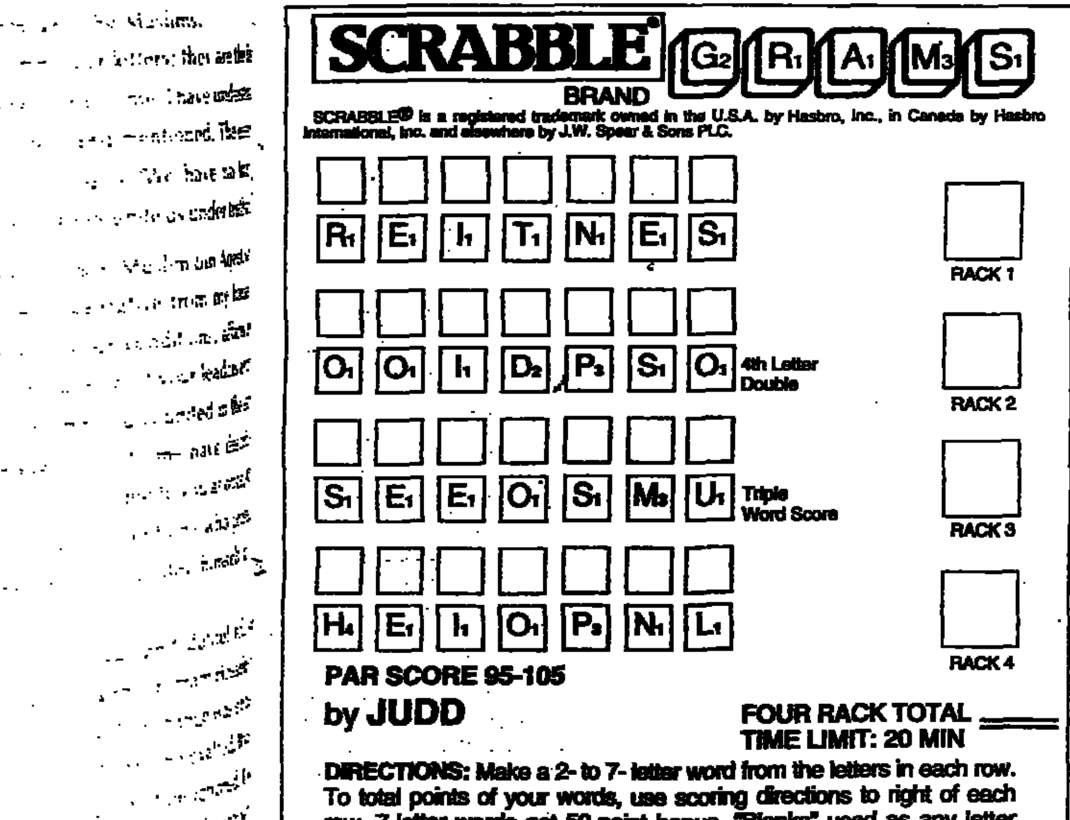
A federal task force recommended in 1989 that men aged 40 and above consider taking aspirin regularly. It said aspirin could cut the risk of a heart attack in half for healthy men with no history of cardiovascular disease.

But the same task force said last year that aspirin's value in preventing heart attacks might be outweighed by its long-term side effects such as gastrointestinal ulcers, hemorrhagic stroke or sudden death.

Researchers learned in the late 1980s that regular use of aspirin lowered the risk of heart attacks and non-fatal strokes in people with cardiovascular disease, which causes about 40 percent of all deaths in the United States.

The CDC's estimates of aspirin usage were based on a telephone survey of 548 Wisconsin adults in 1991 and 1,137 michigan adults in 1994.

(Reuter)



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THOUGHT

Zeal is like fire, it needs both feeding and watching.

Proverb

PRAYER

Noon 04:02
Evening 05:47
Dawn (tomorrow) 13:03
Sunrise (tomorrow) 20:42

Doctors Needed to Check Respiratory Problems in South Africa

PRETORIA — South Africa's Health Ministry issued a call for volunteer doctors to examine hundreds of people stricken with respiratory problems in Prieska, an asbestos-mining region in northern Cape Province.

In a communique published in Pretoria, it said 25 doctors were needed for a one-week period, as provincial authorities were unable to cope with the situation.

Some 1,000 people have already disclosed that they are having respiratory troubles, it added.

Besides its asbestos reserves, Prieska is the site of an asbestos dumping zone that is considered dangerous to health.

The ceilings of homes in many black neighborhoods in South Africa are fitted with asbestos, which experts have linked with lung cancer.

(AFP)

TODAY IN HISTORY

1867 - Prussian troops annex Duchy of Holstein.

1965 - U.S. troops in Vietnam are authorized to engage in offensive operations.

1973 - Spain's General Issimo Francisco Franco relinquishes some of his power by naming Admiral Louis Carrero Blanco as premier.

1976 - Large force of Syrian troops moves into Lebanon, where civil war rages.

1987 - Seven civilians die in clash between grenade-throwing Tamil rebels and police commandos on main street of Batticaloa in Sri Lanka.

1988 - Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze tells United Nations that Moscow would observe permanent moratorium on nuclear testing if United States also agrees.

1989 - South Africa's President P.W. Botha appears intent on extending state of emergency for fourth year although black unrest has subsided.

1990 - Czechoslovakia holds its first free elections in 44 years-Vaclav Havel is elected president.

1991 - Speeding passenger train crashes into a parked freight train in Ghotki, Pakistan, killing at least 100 passengers and injuring 225 others.

1992 - Earth Summit delegates approve new UN body to monitor compliance with environmental treaties.



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We Wil

German

Swiss to Vote

Arms Sales, EU

We Will Do a Good Job, German Leader Tells Blair

BONN — British Prime Minister Tony Blair and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl pledged to strengthen relations between the two countries and work together for the success of the European Union summit and other upcoming international gatherings.

"I'm sure, prime minister, we will do a very good job," the chancellor told Blair before they went into the talks, which lasted some two hours and had been expected to concentrate on European issues. No statement was issued or planned after the talks ended, officials said.

It was the British premier's first official visit hosted by a foreign government, but not the first time he has held direct talks with Kohl — he got the red carpet treatment in Bonn a year ago when he was leader of a Labour Party in opposition.

Kohl said he appreciated that Blair had come to Germany for this first official visit, taking it as a sign of his desire — which the chancellor said he shared — to ensure that relations between their countries "continue" to be very warm".

For Germany, it is of "fundamental importance" that the two countries continue along the same road together as they had over the past 40 years, Kohl said.

"We are standing in the middle of dramatic change in the world



and in Europe," the chancellor said.

In a few days, he recalled, they would have to negotiate and sign a revision of the Maastricht Treaty at the European summit in Amsterdam of June 16 and 17, followed by a meeting of the group of eight countries in Denver and then the special NATO enlargement summit in Madrid in July.

"Many people in Eastern and Southeastern Europe are looking up to us at this moment," Kohl said, referring to the hopes of such countries to join the EU and NATO, "because for long we told them if communism was overcome they would be welcome in Europe."

It was the will of the German government and people to go ahead together on this path with all its partners, and in particular with Britain, he said.

"I'm sure, prime minister, we will do a very good job," the chancellor told Blair. He was equally sure those that expected them not to would be disappointed.

Blair said: "I want to see warm and strong relations between Britain and Germany. I believe that is in the interests of our two countries, in the interests of Europe and of the wider world."

It was important to recognize they faced common economic and political challenges. "In particular it is obviously important that we get a successful conclusion to the intergovernmental conference at Amsterdam. We will be working hard for that."

Blair agreed with Kohl it was "tremendously important" to widen Europe to East European countries. "It is vitally important for peace and stability in the world," he said.

In an article for the popular German daily *Bild* coinciding with the visit, Blair called for better relations with Germany and "a people's Europe": He wrote "I want to change the relationship between our two countries decisively for the better."

Blair accepted there would be areas of disagreement — "like who should host the world cup in 2006, for example!" — but what



mattered was "to be able to debate serious issues in a serious and friendly way," he wrote.

He said he had asked other EU leaders to understand that "because of our history and geography, the Amsterdam agreement currently under discussion must recognize that we keep our own border and immigration controls".

But above all, he wanted a "new approach to Europe", as too often people felt remote from what European leaders were doing or saying.

"That must change. We must emphasize the real people's agenda — jobs, crime, environmental protection, security. These are the people's priorities. We must build a people's Europe."

(AFP)

Horn Calls For Socialist Unity ahead of Elections

BUDAPEST — The success of Hungary's economic stabilization was likely to help the Socialist Party (MSZP) repeat its 1994 election victory next year, Prime Minister Gyula Horn said.

Horn, president of the senior government party MSZP, said in his opening speech at a party Congress that an austerity program launched in 1995 led the economy to sustainable growth the first time in almost thirty years.

"The rate of (economic growth) will reach the average of the European Union already in 1997," he said.

The 1995 program, while it had cut the soaring budget and current account deficits, also led to a 17 percent fall in real wages, knocking the socialists to third place in opinion polls behind two opposition parties.

Horn cracked down hard in his speech on both his leftist critics within the party and right-wing opposition parties which denounce the socialist-liberal rule for opening a wide schism between the rich and the poor.

"Hard as it may be, we have to make people realize that the road chosen after 1989 — the first stage of market economy — is not determined by morality, but by the accumulation of capital," Horn said.

The fact that Hungary was likely to begin talks on joining the NATO in September and on European Union (EU) membership in January 1998, was also a credit to the government, Horn said.

Horn called for unity within the party ahead of the elections, saying the first and most difficult stage of transition into a market economy was over but MSZP had yet to convince Hungarians that future welfare demanded further efforts.

"The society must be prepared that its future will be much easier but the fight is far from over," he said, adding however, that the government did not plan any measures to speed up economic growth artificially.

Hungary expects its gross domestic product to rise at an increasing pace of two to five percent on the next five years.

The next general elections are likely to be held in May 1998.

(Reuter)

Swiss to Vote on Arms Sales, EU Talks

GENEV — The Swiss vote Sunday on whether to ban the export of "war material" and to decide if a referendum is needed before any eventual negotiations to join the European Union.

The Socialist Party (PSS) which is one of the four governing parties, called for the vote to assess support for a ban on arms exports. With the support of the Greens and of religious and pacifist groups, the PSS wants to ban the export of war material and of material which can be put to both military and civilian use.

The voters will also be asked to say if they consider a national referendum to be necessary prior to any opening of negotiations to take Switzerland into the European Union.

On the arms issue, the government had proposed two laws to tighten controls on sales but they were drastically watered down in Parliament under pressure from the arms industry lobby.

The trade unions are torn between supporting a ban on ethical grounds and opposing it to protect jobs.

The number of jobs under threat if a ban goes into effect is generally put at 5,000 but according to some economic experts, up to 120,000 people could be affected in 3,000 firms.

In particular, the renowned Swiss multi-function pocket knife would fall into the category of material suited for both civilian and military use.

Those who support a ban point out that in any case the arms industry is in recession with thousands of jobs already lost and conversion to civilian production generally taking a relatively short time.

Arms exports accont for only 0.23 percent of the country's exports and 1.0 percent of the world's total arms trade.

In 1996, Switzerland sold arms worth 233 million Swiss francs ($165 million). Customers included Oman, Germany, the United States, Austria and France.

The Lausanne weekly magazine *L'Illustre* noted that banning arms exports would be a way for Switzerland to "refurbish its image tarnished by the revelations about its materialistic and opportunistic attitude during the war" — an allusion to its financial ties with Nazi Germany.

In 1972, a similar referendum saw the majority of voters reject a ban on arms exports. But this time the vote takes place in a period of recession and amid a decline in the country's moral standing in the world.

The other big question all voters will be asked to answer is whether the government must be required to consult the people and the cantons before opening talks on EU membership.

On December 6 1992, the Swiss voted against being part of the European economic area. Support for Europe has grown since then but inspite of this, talks on a straightforward bilateral accord with the EU have been unsuccessfull.

In 17 cantons, voters will be consulted on almost 40 other matters of mainly local interest.

In Valais, voters will be asked if their canton should provide financial guarantee to the town of Sion which is seeking to host the winter olympics in 2006. (AFP)

Coup Leaders Ask for Int'l Help in Ending Siera Leone Crisis

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone - Faced with military threats, a workers' boycott and global condemnation, coup leaders Friday showed signs of weakening by asking the international community to bring the crisis to an "amicable settlement."

The statement on state-run radio was an indication that 12 days after their ouster of Sierra Leone's civilian government, the embattled forces of Maj. Johnny Paul Koroma were tiring.

On Thursday, they admitted they lacked the firepower to win another clash with Nigerian forces who bombarded the capital Monday. They offered a partial compromise, saying ousted President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah could return — but not as president — if Nigeria agreed to release Foday Sankoh, a rebel leader whom Koroma has invited to help run the country. Sankoh is under arrest in Nigeria on gun-running charges.

Mutinous soldiers launched the coup with a May 25 prison break, releasing Koroma and 700 hardened criminals. Koroma said he staged the coup to preserve a peace accord with Sankoh's Revolutionary United Front, which waged a six-year civil war that ended in November.

He accused Kabbah of dividing the country along tribal lines and causing the November peace accord to collapse.

On Friday, Koroma's ruling armed forces Revolutionary Council proclaimed its "willingness to negotiate" and said it was "appealing to the international community and friends of Sierra Leone to bring the present impasse to an amicable settlement."

The Junta also said it wanted



to "renew" its commitment to the United Nations, Organization of African Unity, and the Economic Community of East African States — all of which have condemned the May 25 coup and indicated their support for military power to reverse it.

Nigeria, the region's military powerhouse, warned Thursday it was building its forces and had commitments from other West African nations to provide troops to help oust Koroma.

The Nigerian commander of the West African Peacekeeping Force, Maj. Gen. Victor Malu, described Monday's fighting — which left at least 53 dead — as "skirmishes."

The real operation to flush out Koroma has yet to begin, he warned.

Koroma responded by mounting machine guns at the campus of Fourah Bay College, on a hill overlooking the city. Lecturers there spotted troops cleaning out World War II bunkers and settling in for a fight.

The standoff has crippled Freetown, Sierra Leone's once lively seaside capital. Workers have refused coup leaders' appeals to return to their jobs, prompting warnings Friday of mass firings if they did not comply by Monday.

"With the supply of surplus labor in the country, replacement can be easily secured," they warned in a radio statement.

Long lines have been forming at a handful of shops that open daily for a few hours to sell food and other necessities. The majority of stores and businesses remain closed, however, as do banks, making it impossible for most people to go shopping.

Renegade soldiers Roam Freetown's streets, harassing drivers, looting houses, and taking over abandoned luxury hotels.

Circus on Tightrope But Russian Kids Still Love It

IVANOVO, Russia — She flies through the air with the greatest of ease, but little Sveta, the 11-year-old baby of the Marchenko troupe, must work on her act if she is to make a career in the hard-up Russian circus.

Sveta wants to perform on the trapeze when she outgrows her lacy pink froufrou and, more importantly, gets too heavy for the elder Marchenkos to bounce her high into the air on the soles of their feet in their act's finale.

"These days there are a lot of artists competing for jobs and there's not much money in Russian circus. You have to be adaptable."

Lyudmila Marchenko, who runs the troupe with her husband Oleg, says Sveta has been encouraged to learn a whole range of other disciplines during three years on the road.

"These days there are a lot of artists competing for jobs and there's not much money in Russian circus. You have to be adaptable," Lyudmila said backstage after a performance in Ivanovo, a depressed industrial city north-east of Moscow.

The theater is one of dozens of purpose-built big tops scattered around Russia by Soviet leaders anxious to distract a circus-loving nation from the dreariness of everyday life.

Backstage it swarms with a menagerie of bears, tigers, horses, chickens, a llama and much else. A juggler calmly practises in a corner as the clowns, puffing fiercely on their cigarettes, work out new moves on their routine.

Out front, the band raucously accompanies every act, the spotlight picks out a slender girl turning somersaults on the high wire and several hundred youngsters, sticky buns and ice cream in hand, are having the time of their lives.

It is a sign of the times, however, that Sveta has spent half her brief career abroad, where the skills of the Russian circus draw in much bigger-money crowds than the 500 or so people who paid $2 each for the midweek show in Ivanovo.

"We played to 80 full houses in Paris last year. Here people just don't have the money," grumbled Yuri, pausing to thump one of his agitated performing bears. "Sometimes I wonder why we bother performing at all here. But we're a state troupe. We have to work. And at least the animals get to eat."

Russians' Appetite for Escapist Fun Undimmed

Alexei Yudin, director of the Ivanovo circus, one of 43 owned by the government's Rosgostsirkh (Russian state circus) Corporation, says the hardest part is keeping up the crumbling structure.

"It's hard to keep up the building when we have to keep prices down because the city economy is doing badly."

Ivanovo, once home to the Soviet textile industry, has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country.

"People don't have the money to spend on fun," Yudin said. "It's a great shame. The circus is the best place to have fun."

Those people who do still manage to come, seem to agree.

"This is the best culture Russia has," said Alla Kuzmina, treating grandchildren Viktoria, 6, and Pavel, 7, to distinctly unwholesome looking candy concoctions in the interval.

She remembers coming to the romantic old wooden circus as a child and now brings the youngsters to see every touring show in town — meaning a trip to the circus every month or two.

"It's much better than television," reckoned Ashot Sokhikyan, whose wide-eyed four-year-old daughter Zina is an avid fan of the animal acts and the clowns.

"People forget what it's like but here they remember what it means to have atmosphere," said clown Adam, with an earnest maturity belying his 18 years and the fact he makes a living walking round with a live chicken on his head.

Few Western children would expect to see the circus more than once or twice a year, but Rosgostsirk ensures that its 10,000-odd state-employed artists are constantly touring its venues in Russia as well as starring in shows abroad.

"We are all going through hardships, the circus no less than the rest of Russia. When people don't get paid, they don't go to the circus. But though we have our troubles we have successes too."

"We change the show all the time. The idea is to get people to come to the circus every month," Yudin said.

Non-afficionados might carp that one tightrope walker or juggler is much like another. But the real draw tends to be the animals. "Last month it was sea lions," Yudin said. "This month, it's tigers. They're generally the main attraction."

Animals Still Biggest Draw in Russia

That emphasis on animals has seen circuses in the West come under criticism from animal welfare groups.

It is an experience that annoys Vladimir Shevchenko, tiger trainer and leader of the troupe on tour at Ivanovo.

"Our animals are perfectly healthy. If they weren't happy they wouldn't reproduce would they?" he said, still tense as he wound down in his dressing room after another night's work making tigers ride on horseback and lions roar with rage.

The tension is perhaps justifiable. He spent a week in hospital in March after a lion took a bite out of his leg.

"It is dangerous. But it's worse if the animals hurt each other. There are always doctors for us. But where would I find a vet who knows tigers around here?" he says, totally serious.

At least, though he complains bitterly about the paltry receipts in Russia, he does not face the same questions about the animals' welfare. It is simply not an issue here.

"What else would we come to the circus for?" said one puzzled young mother in the audience, when asked if the circus might be better without the captive big cats. "The circus is the animals."

For all its money problems, a devoted and discerning public, modest but permanent state support and a steady flow of young new performers should see Russian circus into the next century.

"We are all going through hardships, the circus no less than the rest of Russia. When people don't get paid, they don't go to the circus. But though we have our troubles we have successes too," said Galina Kirin, an official at Rosgostsirk in Moscow.

In Ivanovo, tumbling coach Lyudmila Marchenko was equally sanguine after a life spent under the big top: "As long as youngsters like Sveta learn the trade, the circus will go on."

(Reuter)

Russia Launches Military Satellite

MOSCOW — Russia's space forces launched a military Kosmos satellite on Friday amid conflicting versions of whether the satellite was seriously damaged before it even arrived on the launch pad.

The Proton-K booster carrying the satellite lifted off at 8:57 p.m. Moscow time (1657 GMT) from the Baikonur Cosmodrome, a Central Asian launch site which Russia rents from Kazakstan.

The space forces commander, Lt. Gen. Valery Grin, personally supervised the launch, said the announcement, carried by the ITAR-TASS news agency.

Earlier in the day, the business daily *Kommersant* reported that both the booster and the satellite hit the gate and were damaged on May 22, when the rocket was taken out of its hangar to the launching pad.

Noting that the unspecified damage was fixed, *Kommersant* still suggested that the satellite will not be able to function properly, and would end up as a "piece of iron" in orbit.

But the space forces' command and the Defense Ministry denied that there was anything wrong with the satellite, the newspaper said.

Russia long has experienced trouble with its military satellites. Last month, a Zenit-2 booster rocket carrying a military satellite crashed on the steppes of Kazakstan less than a minute after launch from Baikonur. (AP)

World Bank Seeks End to Lead in Gasoline Worldwide

WASHINGTON — The World Bank on Thursday urged all countries to phase out the use of lead in gasoline within the next five years in a call to action ahead of the United Nations Earth Summit later this month.

World leaders are set to gather at the United Nations on June 23 to discuss progress on dealing with issues such as air pollution, water conservation and wildlife protections.

"We are concerned that progress in the five years since the Rio summit has been inadequate and that there's a serious risk of loss of momentum and retreat indeed from the (summit's) goals," said Caio Koch-Weser, the World Bank's managing director of operations.

Pollution was still getting worse in many major cities, and forests and wildlife habitats were being lost at the same rate as before Rio, he said.

World Bank officials said leaded gasoline could easily be phased out to help curb air pollution and health problems.

Lead is believed to cause neurological damage and heart disease among children.

In the five years since the Rio summit, lead use in gasoline in Latin America has fallen by two-thirds, and in Bangkok, Thailand it was phased out in less than three years.

"In other parts of the world we've not seen that, and we really do believe this is one of those actions that could be taken today," said Andrew Steer, director of the World Bank's Environment Department.

The World Bank said it was ready to help governments introduce programs to switch to unleaded gasoline, a conversion that it said would result in big savings in health care and other spending in the long run.

Koch-Weser said governments should take more steps to eliminate the use of ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), and build a global carbon emissions market to stem climate change.

The World Bank said it was ready to create a "carbon offset fund" that would help countries meet their obligations to trim carbon emissions after 2000 under a climate agreement that is to be negotiated in Kyodo, Japan in December.

The fund would sell carbon credits to companies such as utilities in industrialized countries, then use the money on projects in developing countries to trim energy use and cut carbon emissions.

The World Bank called for governments to start treating water as "a precious, economic resource," instead of encouraging waste through subsidies to cities and farm areas.

It also urged governments to make cities more livable, stop subsidizing the use of natural resources, take more steps to preserve key habitats on land and in the oceans, and work with industries to adopt greener practices.

(Reuter)

Egypt to Make First Foray into Space

CAIRO — Egypt is developing a space drill, named after an ancient god, which will be used on the Russian exploration craft Marsokhod to find out if there is life on Mars.

"I think we will call the drill Kheper (the pharaonic name for Scarab), god of ancient Egypt, a symbol of eternity and good luck," said Mossalem Shaltut, of the National Research Institute of Astronomy and Geophysics in Cairo.

The Egyptian Ministry of Scientific Research signed an agreement with the California-based Planetary Society in September and with the Russian Institute of Space Research, Shaltut said.

Under the agreement Egypt will design and make a space drill estimated to cost $3 million and to be used on a flight scheduled for 2001, he added.

"A five-kilogram (11-pound) prototype will be tested in Al-Oweinat, in the western desert, on the border with Sudan and Libya," Shaltut said.

"The nature of the ground there is like the one on Mars. Like Mars there are also sand storms and arid valleys there," he added.

Shaltut said information obtained to date from Mars probes indicate that there is water under a layer of ice which in turn is covered by sand, small rocks and limestone.

"The space probe can drill three to four meters down to remove a sample of water. The American space probes Viking 1 and Viking 2 which were used in 1975 were only able to dig 10 centimeters deep and could not reach water level," Shaltut said.

Shaltut said this would be the first time water samples have been taken to determine if there is life on Mars.

"The drill will be put in the Marsokhod, a Russian spacecraft, and the equipment will take off from Cape Canaveral in 2001," Shaltut said.

He said he hoped the success of this project will pave the way for the creation of an Egyptian space agency to help built telecommunications satellites instead of buying them from abroad.

"Egypt has had since 1963 an astronomic observatory, one of the world's largest reflector-telescopes which has a 74-inch diameter ... and helped in 1930 in the discovery of Pluto," he said.

A space agency would help bring back home 80 percent of Egyptian satellite experts who are currently working in Europe or the United States and bolster national security in the face of Israeli satellites, he added.

The Planetary Society, with which Egypt signed the agreement to develop the drill, is a non-government space organization which claims 100,000 members across the world. It works closely with Russian, French and U.S. space agencies to test explorations on Mars.

The society has conducted tests on the Russian space robot and has co-sponsored with the United Nations and the European Space Agency workshops in several developing nations such as Egypt, Pakistan and Mexico. (AFP)

Polish Centrists Reject Pact With Left or Right

WARSAW — The chief of Poland's centrist Union for Freedom (UW) party rejected the possibility of a coalition with either the ruling ex-communists or the powerful right-leaning opposition led by the solidarity union.

"These groupings are very similar conglomerates, which merely have different names. It is hard to say which of these two would be worse for Poland," UW leader Leszek Balcerowicz said in comments quoted by PAP news agency.

Parliamentary elections due around September are likely to be dominated by the democratic left alliance (SLD) of former communists and their bitter foes, the rightist solidarity election action (AWS).

Opinion polls suggest that they may each gain about one third of parliamentary seats, meaning that smaller parties like the UW could be crucial to forming a governing coalition.

The UW includes many of the intellectuals who were behind the pre-1989 opposition to communist rule and then formed the first democratic governments.

As Finance Minister, Balcerowicz steered through radical shock-therapy reforms widely credited with laying the foundations for Poland's present economic growth.

The ex-communists would love to lure the UW into a coalition to help them to shed the stigma of their origins in the repressive old system.

But Balcerowicz spurned their approaches, rejecting their suggestions that the UW had many policies in common with them.

"The SLD is trying to attach itself to us and offer its cheek for a kiss," PAP quoted him as telling students in the southern city of Katowice.

"But in practice huge differences divide us, in policies and regarding our will to pursue reforms."

Some supporters of the AWS would also like a coalition with the UW to reassure voters that the union-led alliance, which has some radical populist factions, would pursue market reforms.

But Balcerowicz is also contemptuous of the AWS, which includes estranged former allies, and he savaged its election program as incoherent when it was announced last month.

While the UW's tactics allow it to keep its principles pure, critics wonder if it has any future on its own. Its famous names, heroes of the democracy movement such as Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Jacek Kuron, are fading from politics.

Mazowiecki, the first democratically-elected prime minister after 1989, may not stand in the elections and Kuron, Poland's most popular politician, has had some health problems and has kept a low profile in recent months.

(Reuter)

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JUNE 8, 1997

Make First ... to Space

...ntrists Reject ... Left or Right

The Health Care System

PART 2

We would like to look more thoroughly at one or two examples of the cost of inadequate preventive health care for women. Twelve thousand women die each year as a result of undetected cervical cancer. The treatment and cure for cervical cancer in its early stages have been known for decades. The pap smear test involves a relatively simple procedure. Yet only an estimated 20 percent of American women have this test each year.

There is also a test you can give yourself, invented by an American and costing twenty-five cents, which was unavailable in the United States in 1967 and had to be imported from Denmark. While conducting a study on these self-administered tests for cervical cancer, the researchers met with good acceptance but remarked that 53 percent of the women approached had never had a Pap smear.

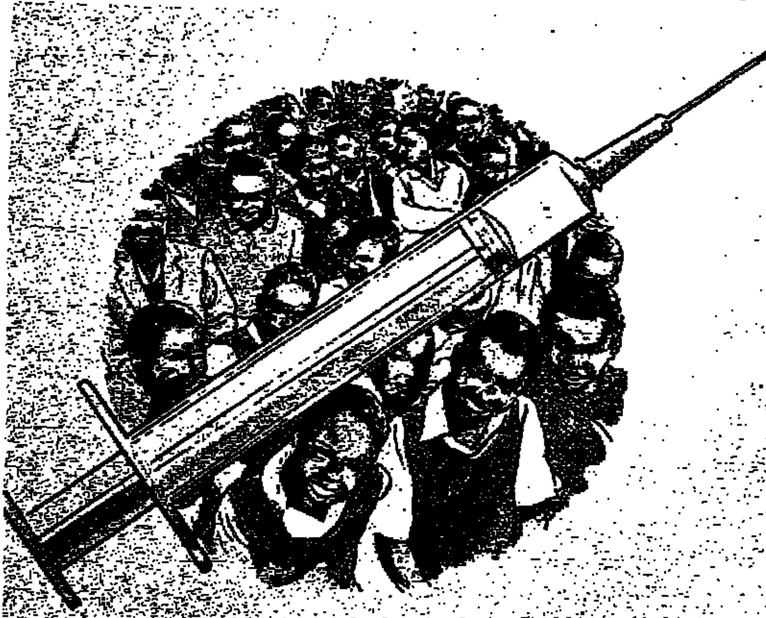
Even though these simple diagnostic procedures are known, thousands of women have cerical cancer and it goes unnoticed until it has spread to other parts of the body, when it is much less treatable and in many cases fatal. There are many factors contributing to this situation, and we can only point out some of them.

The situation with breast cancer is even more serious, since it kills at almost four times the rate of cervical cancer, and even women who do go for physical exams are not routinely examined for breast abnormalities.

The Power and Role of Male Doctors

Since the 1930 Depression, when the incomes of many doctors decreased, the medical profession has practiced what Rick Kunnes has called "professional birth control." The result is that we have fewer doctors per person than we had 75 years ago. This alone might not be such a disaster if doctors were willing, as a profession, to share their skills widely and train paramedical personnel or give more responsibility to nurses for routine procedures. The facts seem to be to the contrary. Instead of sharing its skills, the medical profession used to keep its knowledge restricted, and only during the last 3 decades has it permitted other health workers to assume roles that alleviate the crisis of the doctor shortage. Many cases it is not even a matter of skill but of simple procedures which not only waste the doctor's time, but could often be done by the patient herself.

Another result of this imperialism of knowledge is that many women have not learned enough about their health needs to demand Pap smears or breast self-examination instruction as a public service. This kind of ignorance about our bodies, and particularly those parts related to reproduction and sexuality, is connected with the alienation and shame and fear that have been imposed on us as women. Some people feel that this is an internalization of male values, of the male fear and envy of the generative and sexual powers of women.



A doctor has been given unusually broad powers. It is "he" who decides which patients are treated and where; the cost of treatment; who goes to the hospital; which treatment is given and for how long; and which drugs are administered and in what quantities. In fact, all health care has become equated in the public mind with the practice of medicine by physicians. This has enormous implications. One result has been that the roles of other health workers — nurses, for example — have been unnecessarily limited by licensing and tradition. Through its organizational representatives the medical profession has jealously guarded the prerogative of being the exclusive access route for health care by the threat of legal punishment of paramedical people and nurses who practice medicine. For example, lay midwives in Santa Cruz, California, were arrested and charged with practicing medicine without a license in 1974.

The physician is the gatekeeper of the health-care system... not only does he control the entry into the health-care system, but also he provides the only pathway through the system. Other health professionals who might offer great relief or meaningful benefits to the patient may never see her because, from the doctor's perspective, she is not sick or her health needs are not the kind the doctor recognizes or understands. No matter how many other professionals are available, patients must wait until the doctor screens, refers, or "writes orders."

The consequences of this power and control are not simply frustrating for other health workers and for patients. They are the basis for the unusually lucrative income which doctors enjoy. Doctors are still the highest paid of any profession in the United States and many other countries including Iran.



Women as Workers in the Health System

The restriction of women in health care to the most menial and lowest-paying status seems to be further evidence of the dominance of male doctors. The financial rewards of being a doctor are high, while the salaries of other health workers, nurses and hospital workers in general — predominately female — have been notoriously low. One nurse told us that, having had several years of experience as an R.N., she went back to school, and after she had received her college degree her salary was increased by about four dollars a week.

Recent figures show that over 75 percent of the U.S. federal funds allocated for training health workers went for the training of physicians and less than 20 percent for nursing, despite the fact that the average M.D. regularly makes four times the annual earning of a nurse.

The fact that nursing has been an overwhelmingly female profession, with little autonomy and molded to serve the needs of the mostly male medical profession, has probably frustrated many talented nurses and deprived the people at large of the benefits of skilled independent nursing care.

Currently feminist voices are being heard in the nursing profession, challenging the traditional subordination of women in the system of male medicine.

(Courtesy Our Bodies, Ourselves)

(Concluded)



CAIRO: File photo showing Egyptian firemen try to extinguish a fire that erupted in a paper factory in Kalyub (25 km north of Cairo) as a result of heavy sandstorm that struck Cairo. The sandstorm reached speed of 90 km/h killing 12 people and injuring dozens.

(AFP PHOTO)

United Nations Arrears to Be Paid by U.S.

UNITED NATIONS — The Clinton administration is gearing up for a major push to convince the republican-controlled Congress to pay more than $1 billion which Washington owes the United Nations.

U.S. Ambassador Bill Richardson, a former congressman, is expected to spearhead the fight, in which the administration hopes to enlist the help of former secretaries of state from the Ronald Reagan and George Bush administrations.

U.S. officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the hope is to convince congressional leaders that the arrears issue will threaten American influence within the United Nations.

Meanwhile, the United Nations and its new Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, are seeking ways to convince the American people that the United Nations makes positive contributions to their lives and is worth their tax dollars.

"We should engage civil society as a routine," Annan told executives of the Associated Press during a luncheon last week. "We have to find a way to tell the people how we impact on their lives."

Last February, President Bill Clinton promised Annan that the White House would pay the U.S. arrears. Clinton also encouraged Annan to begin discussions with Sen. Jesse Helms, House speaker Newt Gingrich and other lawmakers who hold the key to paying the bills.

Congressional leaders formed a working group to discuss the issue. But last month, congressional Republicans set down conditions which UN and U.S. officials admit would be nearly impossible to meet in full.

These include reducing the U.S. share of both the UN operating budget and the peacekeeping fund from about 25 percent to 20 percent and crediting the United States for money it spends in support of UN operations.

Congress also wants the United Nations to impose more budget restraints and allow the General Accounting Office, a congressional watchdog agency, to check the UN books.

UN officials insist they have been aggressive in curbing spending and reducing the UN headquarters bureaucracy. last week, the UN financial chief, Joseph Connor, announced proposals that would slash the 1998-1999 budget to $2.583 billion, compared with $2.603 billion for 1996-1997.

But reductions in the percent which Washington must pay would require approval by the 185-member General Assembly. Diplomats from such major U.S. allies as Germany, Japan, and Britain refuse to discuss lowering the U.S. percentages until Washington pays the arrears.

They also want commitment that future bills will be paid in full and on time.

The success of the administration effort may depend largely on the image of Annan, a respected UN insider who won election after the United States vetoed a second term for his predecessor, Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Washington claimed Boutros-Ghali was laggard in pressing for UN reform. But a U.S. failure to resolve the arrears issue may well undercut Annan's support among the Europeans, Africans and Latin Americans.

They were satisfied with Boutros-Ghali but accepted a change in leadership in hopes a new secretary-general would manage to get Washington to pay its bills.

"I would hope that at the end of my term, we would have a revitalized and energized United Nations," Annan told AP.

But failure to deliver on the arrears will make it difficult for Annan and his U.S. supporters to win general assembly approval for such measures as staff reductions. those are unpopular among developing countries which see the United Nations as a giant employment agency.

During his meeting with AP executives, Annan admitted that the United Nations had failed to convince most Americans that the organization is worth their tax dollars.

He said senior UN officials were "looking at our own public information department," which has often been criticized as bloated and ineffectual.

Annan, who took office last January, cited the work of little known UN agencies which regulate international air traffic, care for refugees, monitor health care standards and supervise the world's telecommunications frequencies.

"Without them, there would be chaos," he said.

(AP)

Albright Scolds Croatia Over Refugees, War Crimes

ZAGREB — U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright scolded Croatia recently for its failure to meet pledges on refugees and war crimes and warned that if it did not exercise "moral" leadership in the region Washington would continue to oppose aid and other benefits.

A grim-faced Croatian President Franjo Tudjman interrupted Albright at a news conference to defend Zagreb's actions. But Albright made clear that keen disagreements remained.

(Reuter)





Edwin Hubble Milky Way

My Dream

When I sleep in the night,
I drift a way to dreamland.
I dream of a better future.
A green world, beautiful nature.
No population, politics, no fights.
I dream that all are one in the eyes of God.
No one's superior or inferior and no one's a fraud.
I then wake up to find myself in a world so very bad,

BEAUTY

Beauty is something,
That is very rare.
Beauty can be found,
In people who share.
Beauty is in a flower,
That blooms all day.
Beauty is in a child,
Who laughs and plays.
Beauty is God's heavenly gift,
From above.
Beauty is God's gift,
Of perfect love.

Our solar system occupies a minuscule part of the galaxy we call the Milky Way. There are millions of such galaxies.

In 1929 the American astronomer, Edwin Hubble, proved that the galaxies are moving apart from one another at tremendous speeds.

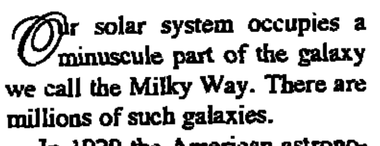
Scientists had known this at least a decade before Hubble proved it. In 1922 a Russian mathematician, Alexander Friedmann, had pointed out that if the universe was expanding because the galaxies were moving apart, the galaxies must have been closer to each other a hundred years earlier, still closer a thousand years earlier, still closer a million years earlier, and at one time they must have all been part of one great mass.

In 1927, a Belgian astronomer named Georges Lemaitre who was unaware of Friedmann's work came to the same conclusion as the Russian.

He called the original mass from which all the galaxies took birth, the *cosmic egg*. He said the *cosmic egg* had exploded, flinging all its matter out, and the fragments (galaxies) were still moving apart because of the force of that explosion.

The theory was popularised in the 1930s and 1940s by the Russian-born American scientist George Gamov. He gave the primeval explosion the name 'Big Bang' and the theory came to be known as the Big Bang Theory.

The Big Bang theory does not explain how the *cosmic egg* and therefore the universe came into being. It only offers an explanation for the present state of the universe.



Toy seller, toy seller,
What do you sell?
Ballons red, blue and green,
apple shaped, flute shaped and lean
Whistles made of cheap metal,
Paper toys soft like a rose petal
Green glasses made of plastic,
Toy candles with blue wicks
Brinjal, radish and chilly made of wax,
Rings studded with colored stones
Toy seller, toy seller children surround you,
As you sing and push your cart colored blue
You are the dream of every child,
For, you cure their fevers mild. mild.

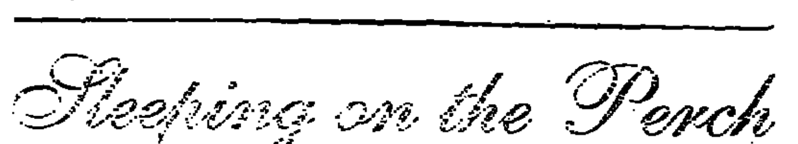
Study these pictures for a few moments, then put the paper away. See how many things you can remember.

What have they all got in common?



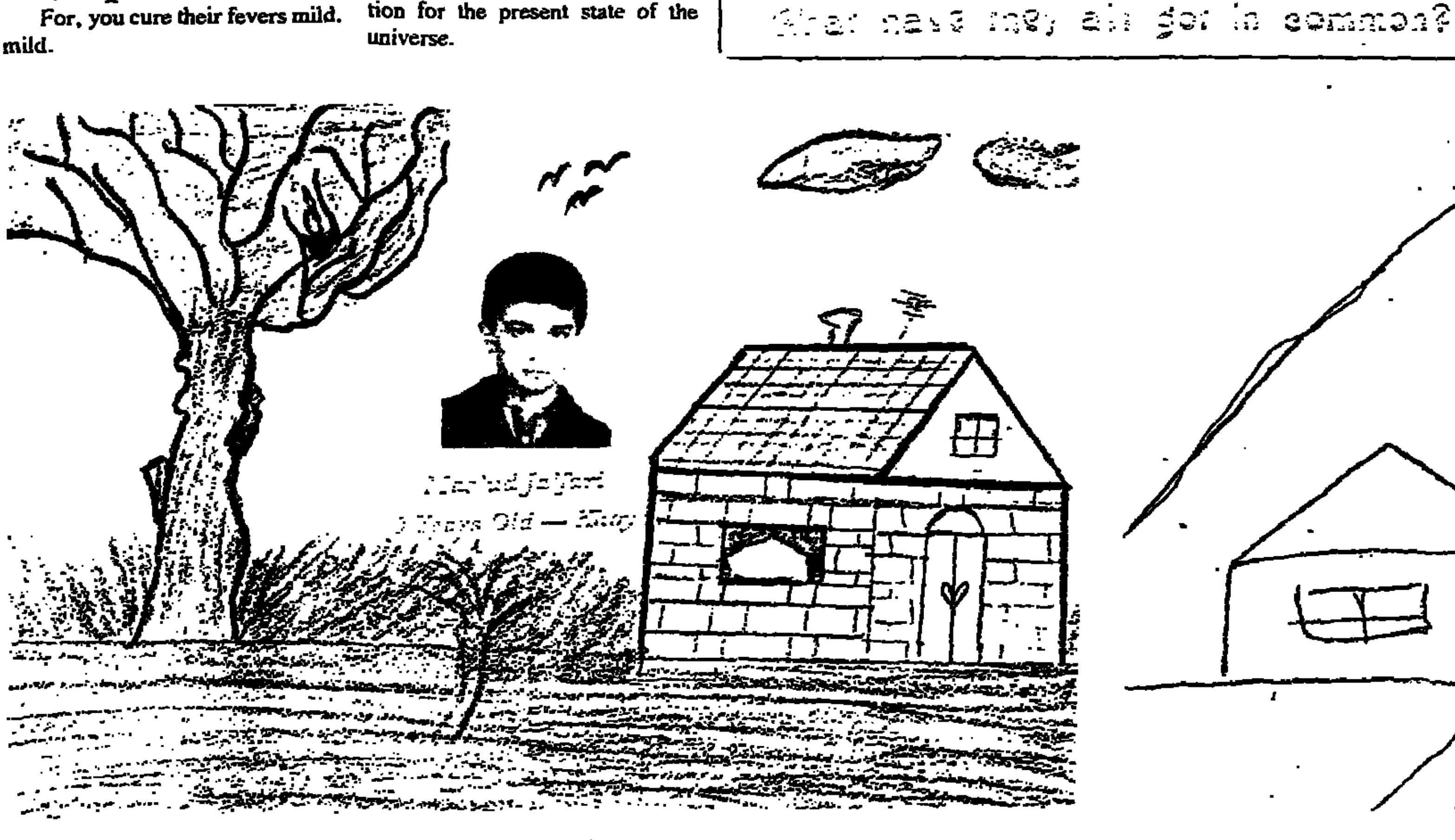


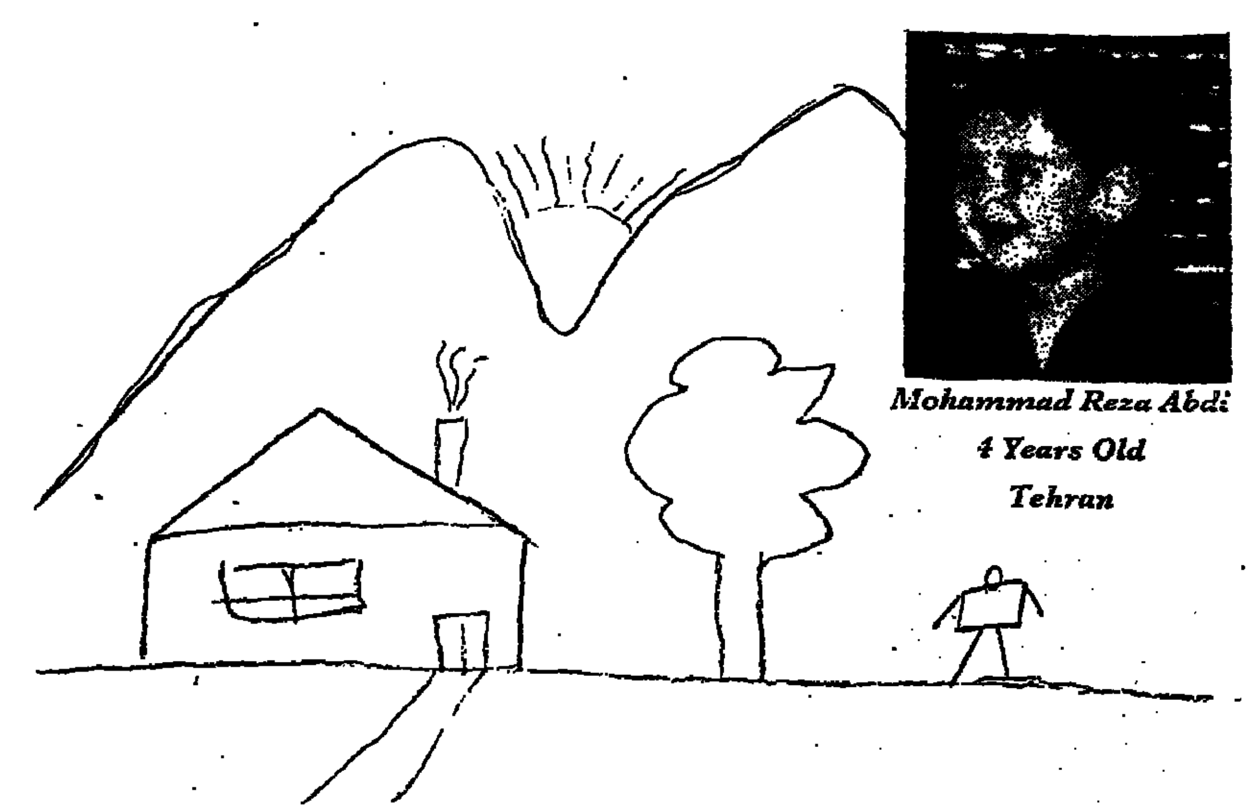
Momotaro, a three-year-old Dalmatian, is the star attraction for the children of Togane City, 80 km east of Tokyo, since he started riding a bicycle. His training was perfected by his owner, Hirokazu Nishi, 49, who used to work in a zoo before he started breeding dogs. The popularity Momotaro enjoys is such that whenever he goes for a ride, a bunch of children accompanies him.



How do birds sleep on their perch without falling? The birds seem fixed to the perch when they settle for the night.

This is possible because of autosuggestion from the brain. Just as the bird falls asleep on its perch, the subconscious mind of the bird sends impulses to the leg muscles to bond themselves. The interlocking of the leg muscles coincide with sleep. The talons of the bird's feet provide the necessary grip to stay on the perch all night long.



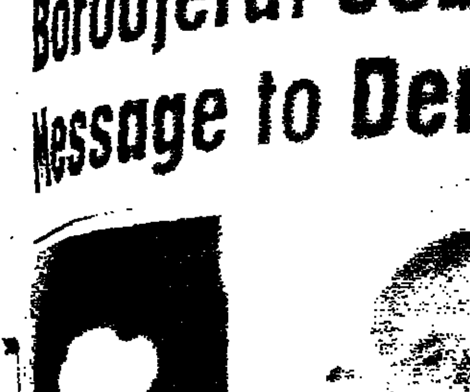


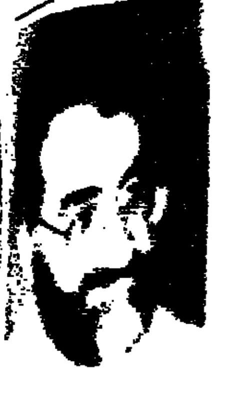
Mohammad Reza Abdi
4 Years Old
Tehran



China Cautions Japan Over Alliance With U.S.

Boroujerdi Sub
Message to De





Anti-Taleban Alliance Denies Taleban Victory Claim